The Court Series of French Memoirs

MADAME DE POMPADOUR

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From the Note-book of Maréchale D.

BY

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INTRODUCTION

These Memoirs on Mme. de Pompadour appeared for the first time in France in 1802. Presented to the public as being drawn by Soulavie from the note-book of the Maréchale D——, it is generally admitted that Soulavie's collaboration consisted of scarcely more than the lending of his name and that these Memoirs are the work of someone else, with which no maréchale has anything to do.

The author, inspired by all that which, in the eighteenth century, had been written about the favourite and specially by the history of Mme. de Pompadour published in London by Mlle. Fouque in 1759, has nevertheless produced a most curious work from which the recent historians of the marquise have most freely borrowed.

In fact, these Memoirs give of Mme. de Pompadour a rather faithful picture and very like that which the majority of memorialists has left

to us. They are, as almost all we have relating to her, frankly hostile. For it is one of the ill fortunes of Mme. de Pompadour to be specially known to us through her adversaries, d'Argenson, the Duc de Luynes, and Richelieu.

Her bourgeois origin, her family, the authority which she acquired over the King and which made of the period of her favour a sort of reign, a reproach which was not spared her by the grand lords of her time and the disgraced ministers, the author of these Memoirs repeats with details, but would pass condemnation on these. For him, the important matter, the unpardonable crime of Mme. de Pompadour, was her hostility to the Jesuits and the part she had in their expulsion. In this we grasp the design of the author of the Memoirs: to disparage and vilify the favourite, to show her as a principle of moral and political disorganisation in the State.

That she should solely have in view the omnipotence of the royal power and should have treated in like manner both Parliament and rebellious bishop, is a matter which the author does not stop to consider: he is anxious to see in the expulsion of

the order of Loyola but the mean vengeance of a woman and to make of this expulsion the chief thought of Mme. de Pompadour. Moreover, he would consider as good policy the exile of the Parliaments, if at the same time the marquise had not obtained the exile of the Archbishop of Paris.

As to the boldness of aim which made of her one of the most daring artisans of the overthrow of French alliances, it is, in his opinion, a detail that may be passed in silence. Was there, however, no lack of courage in breaking with the ancient tradition which made of France the enemy of the house of Austria and in raising against herself all the politicians for whom this opposition was a dogma?

All this will show to what extent it is safe to accept the violent attacks of which Mme. de Pompadour is the object in these Memoirs, as well as the fixed determination of their author to lower to the level of mediocre intrigues acts of a higher aspiration which had considerable influence on the prosperity and the destinies of the country.

MADAME DE POMPADOUR

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CHAPTER I

Jeanne Poisson was born in 1722, the daughter of a clerk of that name attached to the Department of Supplies of the army, under one of the four Pâris brothers who was at the head of it.

Her mother was noted for her love affairs; MM. Pâris and Le Normant long claimed the paternity of the subject of this work.

There was in Madame Poisson's conduct that freedom which the gay women of this century have inherited largely from the morals which prevailed in France during the Regency of Philippe d'Orléans.

M. Le Normant de Tournehem, in spite of the doubt, was so certain of being the father of the young Poisson girl, that he took up, with the greatest care, the duties which this relation imposed on him: he presided over that child's edu-

cation with a sort of passion, specially when he saw that she showed great aptitude in the study of the fine arts.

Mademoiselle Poisson, even in her tender years, had already distinguished herself in music, drawing, and engraving; she made such progress that since then the productions of her graver have been favorably compared with some of the prettiest fancy prints.

At the age of eighteen, people admired in her what is called beauty and a pretty face: her beauty was dazzling, when she was in full attire, according to the requirements of her position; she would change into a pretty face in a conversation filled with the interesting objects relating to her education; so that people said of her, in the circle of acquaintances which she formed shortly after her marriage, that she was pretty and beautiful, qualities which are hardly ever found in a woman and which even exclude one another, to some extent, reciprocally.

The affection of M. Le Normant de Tournehem increased with that interesting creature's age; he resolved to marry her in a fashion which would al-

low of no doubt as to his loving her as a daughter, which caused her to be surrounded by a crowd of suitors of the better *bourgeoisie* of the capital.

The young Le Normant d'Etioles, nephew of the personage who here plays the part of father, was among them.

The free access to the house, which his near relationship gave him, permitted him to see Mademoiselle Poisson; he did not see her often without feeling a real passion for her, which his uncle was far from discouraging.

The young lover possessed a quiet character, sound judgment, fluent wit and a good heart, and it has since been stated that M. de Tournehem had long conceived the idea of some day placing his daughter in the King's bed and that no one else had appeared to him more suitable than his nephew to endure with patience the metamorphosis of a wife into a mistress of Louis XV.

The whole difficulty consisted in obtaining permission from Father Le Normant, who saw in this marriage several sorts of improprieties.

The name and birth of Mademoiselle Poisson were not the least of these; Father Poisson, pros-

ecuted for his management and for his dishonesty in his position and sentenced to be hanged, had taken shelter in foreign lands for some years and although a new judgment had broken the first, his name was blemished in an ineffaceable manner.

Her mother was a vulgar Paris *bourgeoise* who, seeing her daughter's pretty face, repeated on every occasion that she intended, ever since she had given her birth, to make of her *un morceau de roi;* so that Mademoiselle Poisson, brought up accordingly, heard herself called *un morceau de roi* from her most tender age.

In spite of these difficulties, the tender affection of M. de Tournehem for the young Poisson girl soon overcame the obstacles which seemed to oppose themselves to the passion and aims of the nephew.

All that there was left to do now was to win over the father of the young man: M. de Tournehem promised to at once give to the young husband one-half of his wealth and to leave him the other half after his death.

This generosity prompted the father as to his decision; he feared that this fortune might pass

with the girl into another family; and this fear, combined with the earnest and pressing solicitations of his son, made him listen to and accept the proposition.

Mademoiselle Poisson became Madame Le Normant d'Etioles.[1]

However it does not appear that her heart had been consulted in this marriage. M. d'Etioles was short, his face was neither handsome nor imposing, she was anything but in love with him, who loved her with a veritable passion which marriage did not moderate: in this case, Madame d'Etioles, very popular in society, did not seem to be in harmony with his efforts to please her.

His considerable wealth permitting him to spend much, he spared nothing either in adornments or amusements, to prove to what extent he loved her.

Although her charms were worthy of inspiring jealousy in a lover, specially to a husband as infatuated as he was, he granted her all the freedom she desired.

He was careful to bring together and to entertain at his country house the most varied company to be found in Paris; a company of which she was

always the principal ornament, as much through a natural gaiety as through the charm of her beauty and talents.[2]

There have been at all times, in Paris, women of intrigue or beautiful women who have become in the capital, centres that drew to them, people of learning or those who have opinions.

It has been assured that Louis XV, who had succeeded in silencing everybody so as to force all his subjects to admiration, feared nothing so much as he did these societies: that of Madame de Pompadour was composed, shortly after her marriage, of Voltaire, Cahusac, Fontenelle, Montesquieu, Abbé de Bernis, Maupertuis and other well-known men.

The ambassadors who have the gift of seizing a word on the fly came to Mme. d'Etioles; but the most celebrated and the most persistent admirer of her beauty was the gallant Abbé de Bernis, now become through the influence of his protectress, minister of foreign affairs, in spite of the obstacles long believed to be insurmountable and which he encountered at every step of his progress.

In truth, Abbé de Bernis liked neither the Jesuits nor the Sulpiciens; the latter had driven him away from their institutions in his province, and he had reached Paris not knowing to whom to turn to trust his fortune: he had at first lived so obscurely in the capital and in so needy a state that his laundress had been both a mother and wife to him; but he had infinite wit, an attractive figure, an appearance susceptible of distinguished conquests: Mme. de Pompadour, into whose house he introduced himself, called him her *pigeon battu,* and he was in her home what is termed in Paris *l'abbé de la maison.*

Not that M. de Bernis was not of distinguished birth; but there are in France so many births of that sort and so many poor and idle lordlings that Abbé de Bernis' sole aim was to distinguish himself by the charm of his wit and of his verse.

He was born at Saint-Marcel d'Ardèche, of which his father possessed a quarter of the fief, living in legal dispute with another nobleman and ruining himself to uphold an interest of but little consequence.

As to Abbé de Bernis, who to-day is ashamed of

his verse, he can not have forgotten that his stances and his society madrigals were the first rungs of his fortune, at present so dazzling.

The aims which Mme. de Pompadour had on the King's heart, the advices and the intrigues which were to make her succeed, made her circumspect and good in the midst of society; she never sent away an admirer wholly disgraced, but the favours which she granted with reserve, successively and by degrees, retained at her disposal influential personages; she said to the most persistent that the King alone could make her unfaithful to her husband, while Binet, her relative, and one of the head *valets de chambres* to the King, informed that prince that there was in Paris a *bourgeoise*, the most beautiful one in the capital, who had promised her husband eternal fidelity, excepting with Louis XV, a jest at which the good-natured d'Etioles was the first to laugh.

Louis XV, on his side, hunting in the forest of Sénart, one stormy day entered the Château d'Etioles and offered to its owner the horns of the stag he had just killed.

M. d'Etioles placed them in his parlour and it is

assured that they have remained there ever since his wife has realised that present from the King.

In the meantime, Mme. d'Etioles, raised in the hope of becoming the King's mistress, joined with her husband in laughing at the jest which people did not suspect would be realised; no one as yet saw anything in it but play, but the steps which she was taking were not the less serious: she had conceived the plan to enslave the King and this resolution compelled her to forget nothing that might facilitate this great conquest.

The hunt is one of the greatest pastimes of Louis XV.

She made known to her husband the inclination which she herself felt for that pleasure and that of riding; M. Le Normant was far from opposing the least objection to this: she ordered made for her clothes of refined and exquisite taste, which were always admired; everything was tried to reach the aim she had in view.

She accompanied the King in all his hunting expeditions, not as belonging to his suite, but as a spectator.

She made a practice of passing the King and of

meeting him as frequently as possible; but she had the mortification of seeing that her efforts were for a long time vain and all her advances useless.

Finally, as she was easily noticeable, because of her figure and face, which were striking, the King passed her so often that he noticed her and asked who she was, without showing either love, or desire.

This eagerness did not escape the piercing eye of a rival who had taken such possession of the King's heart that that prince had become inaccessible to the impressions of all the beauties.

That rival was Mme. la Duchesse de Châteauroux, née Mailly, and one of the daughters of the Marquise de Nesle;[3] she had noticed that Mme. d'Etioles was at all the hunts, that her glances were incessantly turned on the King and that she always strove to display her beauty to his eyes.

Mme. d'Etioles, like a goddess descended from the sky, appeared in the forest of Sénart near the Château de Choisy, now dressed in azure in a rose-colored phaeton, and again in rose-colored dress in phaeton of azure; her beauty was dazzling.[4]

MADAME DE CHATEAUROUX

So that the Duchesse de Châteauroux, who already feared the love of change which she knew to exist in the passions of Louis XV, took offence and had her steps followed by clever young men.

It has been said that Mme. d'Etioles, mingled with the crowd, having dared to display her beauty on the King's passage, Mme. de Châteauroux, who had her pointed out to her because she could not be known by her, took her stand between the King and Mme. d'Etioles like a screen, sought with her feet to find hers and crushed them under the weight of her body, to teach her, by this punishment, to dare show herself to the King; but Mme. d'Etioles' ambition was so patient that nothing could turn it away from its project.

Mme. de Châteauroux, on her side, taking offence because the King had asked her several questions about Mme. d'Etioles, and wishing to upset at a single stroke all the projects she might have formed, and which she feared her constancy would cause her to carry out, affected the tone of an acknowledged favourite and had her informed that the best thing she could do was to stay away from the King's hunting expeditions, which would

henceforth become dangerous for her if she continued to show herself there.

Mme. d'Etioles, who felt too weak to oppose Mme. de Châteauroux, considered herself obliged to obey the crushing orders received; her love seemed to cool, but her ambition and aims became concentrated.

It will not be considered amiss that we fill the void in her story from this moment to the time when the affair was resumed, by a short recital of the King's amours: this has appeared to us necessary for the better understanding of what is to follow.

CHAPTER II

Louis XV was fifteen years of age when he married Princess Marie, daughter of Stanislas Leczinsky, dethroned King of Poland, and now Duc de Lorraine and of Bar; she was then seven years older than he, and although this marriage had been made like all marriages between persons of her rank, without consulting her inclinations and without there being a shadow of possibility that the eyes of a King should ever turn to her, Louis XV lived long with that princess, giving an example of the most faithful conjugal love.

The Queen had nothing attractive about her; the difference of age, although not excessive, was a point worthy of consideration: yet a great number of heirs was evidence of the good understanding existing between the husband and wife, while at the same time it seemed to assure its continuance.

The King, whom the Cardinal de Fleury had

educated in the most rigid maxims of conjugal faith, was rather a credit to his master in scrupulously respecting his principles; habit combined with this completed what duty had begun.

Besides, the Queen possessed good and beautiful qualities, which were sufficient to cover some slight faults which could be noticed in her.

The King was a long time without any unfavourable idea of his wife: some courtiers, cowardly enough to expect from the vices of a King what they did not believe they could secure from the virtues of his youth, tried for a long time to corrupt him; the indignation with which he repaid their proceedings covered them with confusion: one of these was praising to him a well-known lady of the Court, with the intention of inspiring him with sentiments for her; the King replied to him:

"Do you consider her more beautiful than the Queen?"

This unexpected reply, repeated at the Court, disconcerting all the projects, it became impossible to speak about the subject. However, such constancy was not made to last long at Versailles against the force of example, in the midst of a

Court which was daily becoming more corrupt.

When ten or twelve years had passed without any dislike being noticeable in the King, nor any inclination towards debauch, age and the numerous confinements of the Queen caused in the latter and perhaps in both, a coldness or an indifference with which love could not be reconciled.

The disproportion of years was beginning to make itself more and more felt; but the esteem which the King had for Marie Leczinska, a just and due esteem, whether he looked upon her as the mother of a large number of dear children, whether he noticed her excellent character and her piety, still continued, and it may be imagined that it was not without a struggle and without extreme repugnance that he thought of swerving from what he owed her.

But then, as soon as he had cleared the barriers which stopped him, he gave himself up to all the disorders which we are going to simply indicate, and yet, during these disorders, Louis always retained for the Queen, outwardly, the most perfect esteem.

It is true that the moderation of the Queen per-

mitted her rarely to ask a favour; besides, her conduct had endeared her to the people and had won for her the love of the Court, where one seldom sees rendered to virtue the justice it deserves.

When the King gave way to his inclinations, when he no longer hid his desires, when he took the tone of a master who wishes to be obeyed, Cardinal de Fleury, who knew the world and the character of his pupil too well to believe that he wished to constrain himself upon a point about which few men will suffer constraint, thought it well to decide upon the subject on which the King was to set his desires.

The young monarch had not yet made a selection, but his vague inclinations tended towards a *liaison*.

Fleury thought that the most complaisant lady would be the one the King would prefer; he thought also that the least ambitious would be the most suitable to the Court. It is this which made him say: "Well, then, let Mailly be brought to him."

Few ladies would have objected to accept the call, or rather to fight for it, the King being then

the handsomest man of the Court, of the city and perhaps of the kingdom.

The King little by little became attached to Mme. de Mailly; but never did King's mistress get so little profit from her lover.

Disinterested to excess, generous of character, she never asked for anything for herself; it was always to strangers that the favours she requested went: charitable, gentle, affable, obliging, her qualities effaced the blemish on her honour; and far from thinking of enriching herself, it was always with a sort of constraint that she received the small presents made to her by the King.

Louis had lived but a few years, and very modestly, with Mme. de Mailly, and without any scandal at Court, when there came one of her young sisters from convent, where she had heard of the position held by Mme. de Mailly at Court.

Devoured by ambition, having a character the contrary to that of the favourite, with a plan to make herself loved by the King, she wrote to her sister, at Versailles, letter after letter, begging that she be allowed to be her *dame de compagnie,* her secretary, her reader.

The good Mme. de Mailly, who had no malice whatever, allowed herself to be caught by the little *pensionnaire,* who came to establish herself at Versailles and attracted the King, not by her beauty, but because that prince had, in his natural desires, a taste for innocent little girls of tender years.

The young scamp, who noticed it, schemed so well that the prince became tired of Mme. de Mailly and had a child by the little *pensionnaire,* whom he caused to be married to M. de Vintimille, on condition that he would have no commerce with her; and the funniest thing about the matter, in the opinion of all, is that the Archbishop of Paris, M. de Vintimille, their relative, gave to the couple the most holy benediction.

The child born of these amours is the young man whom we call, when he is not about, the *Demi-Louis;* he wears his baptistery on his face, as do without exception, all the King's bastards.[5]

It should be known that the princes of the house of Bourbon must be governed imperiously, but with address, by their mistresses and ministers.

Mme. de Vintimille, who possessed much genius, discretion and imagination, noticed it; she per-

ceived that particular weakness in the King's character, and she profited so well by her discovery, that the cardinal, preceptor and prime minister, became so jealous of her that he had the weakness to show it and to do so with such spite that the extraordinary death of Mme. de Vintimille was attributed to him.

Although the heads of a State think that they have the right to do anything, I do not believe the late M. le Cardinal de Fleury capable of so great a crime: the only reproach made to his policy was too much morality, in a statesman at the head of a kingdom such as France.

His reputation has, however, received a blow in the minds of many people in the death of Mme. de Vintimille.

The King, who did not believe him capable of it, was for a long time inconsolable; he hid himself and wept like a child.

He however returned to Mme. de Mailly who, too little wary, in spite of the example of the past, was already receiving with the same affection her other young sister in the same apartments wherein the deceased had made the King unfaithful.

Mme. de la Tournelle had regular features of great beauty; besides this, she was very graceful and possessed the fine manners of the highest rank; the etiquette of the Court, which she carefully practiced, gave her the air of a great princess, so that the King speaking to her familiarly called her only his *grande princesse*.

M. le Duc d'Agénois, to-day M. d'Aiguillon, who was distractedly in love with her, was receiving from the Duc de Richelieu, to-day Marshal of France, lessons in the intrigue pursued with the King, with an art which the celebrated courtier knew how to direct with so much grace and address.

Ingenious audacity had been a success with Mme. de Vintimille to have her plainness overlooked and please the King.

The beautiful la Tournelle made use of modesty, affected a languishing air and an inflammation of the lungs which she did not have.

She had the coquetry of hiding her pretty face under a *baigneuse* which the King raised to admire her, and often to kiss her, while the deceiver wounded him with her flashing eyes.

After having thus excited the King for several months, seeing that he had fallen in her nets, she played the proud; this King, who did not retreat, attempted to conquer her; she, on her side, multiplied the obstacles and offered objections to which the prince replied like a Castilian monarch or like a prince of the Court and of the century of François I.

The time of positive refusal or of favours was about to come, and it was then that the Marquise de la Tournelle offered conditions.

The first was that she should be a duchesse.

The second, that her sister Mailly should leave the Court and withdraw to a convent.

The third, that the King should restore the glory of his crown, by going to the army: she feared that inactivity and the amours of the King might be injurious to his sway, which she wished to render praiseworthy and peaceful.

The fourth, that she should have a house and that the King should supply all things necessary to her appearance.

The King granted all she asked for and yet she still resisted him, to the point that she was

proclaimed mistress although she really was not.

The Court was at that time of a more reserved tone than that of Louis XIV, to such a degree had the cardinal placed it on a footing of decency and dignity.

A dangerous illness attacked the King while at the army during the favour of Mme. de la Tournelle, then become Duchesse de Châteauroux.

The bishops and the Jesuits who surrounded the King's bed and Court intrigues gave to this prince born religious, anxieties of conscience which led him to send away from the Court, by *lettre de cachet* and openly, Mme. de Châteauroux, who had gone to him at the army.

The Queen hastened to reach Metz, where the King was dying; she had with her Mme. de Flavacourt, one of her ladies, who had as much goodness as her sisters Mailly, Vintimille and Châteauroux had permitted themselves liberties with Louis XV; so that it was noticed that one of the two sisters, the King's mistress, went away from the Court whenever Mme. de Flavacourt came there with the Queen.

It was the most beautiful praise that religious

courtiers could then give Mme. de Flavacourt; for a long while it was believed that her virtue was affected, but it has been discovered that M. le Duc de Richelieu had tempted her with wit, like Satan, and that she had resisted his dangerous insinuations.

The King, cured of his malignant fever and back to Paris, received from Mme. de Châteauroux a rose, a cockade and a very loving note; the King, who had loved her very much, went to see her at night and reconciled himself with her.

This event made such an impression on her that she died suddenly.

The public, which feeds on so many lies and nonsenses, suspected that she had died, as her sister Vintimille, from the effects of poison.

The King therefore found himself, not without pleasures, but without favourite, for, born with a violent temperament, he gave himself up to procurers who procured for him passing pleasures which did not satisfy his character.

The King requires enjoyments combined with amusement, solely capable of cheering up his spir-

its, too frequently and naturally steeped in dark melancholy.

Louis, under these circumstances, listened to a few women who wished to contract *liaisons* with him; Mme. de Lauraguais amused him a short time, during her sister's favour.

After the death of Mme. de Châteauroux, while the King seemed to enjoy himself in the charms of inconstancy, she reappeared like a few other women who proved that that prince was neither particular nor delicate in his choice, for he accepted women of all conditions who were brought to him, without even excepting the *petites grisettes*.

The Duc de Richelieu,[6] who shared his mistresses with him, when he had enough of them, was the one among his courtiers who served him best; he had near the King a convenient apartment and at the little suppers which he gave him he did not fail to summon the women most liable to sustain his credit.

Yet a few introductions are cited wherein his hopes were disappointed: I refer to Mme. du Portail and Mme. de la Popelinière, with whom the King would have nothing to do; the latter,

although witty, had affected manners which offended the monarch.

The first, although beautiful, was very vulgar as to manners and dress.

Mme. de la Popelinière [7] was a singer at the Opéra and was taken away from the theatre by M. de la Popelinière, farmer general, a very rich man, who married her; she thought no doubt that she could not too quickly punish him for his folly by giving herself up to love affairs.

The Duc de Richelieu was at the head of her numerous favourites; he had rented in the house of an upholsterer an apartment adjoining hers and had found a means, through a chimney, to make a connecting door which a large linen-dryer concealed from sight.

An unfortunate trouble which occurred between Madame and one of her women revealed this opening, and the poor husband, instead of hiding his shame by concealing his grief, told the singular adventure with all its details.

In Paris, those who laugh are not on the side of the unlucky husbands; the invention of the chimney was considered so fine that it brought much praise

to Mme. de la Popelinière, to whom all the credit was given.

Her name became so famous that it was given to all sorts of things; it became a fashion to have skirts, fans and head-dresses *à la Popelinière;* some went so far as to imitate the chimney *à la Popelinière.*

As to Madame du Portail, wife of the president of that name, the conversation she had with the King, although it was not carried quite so far as she desired, a thing which she attributed to the excessively respectful love with which she thought she had inspired him, was the cause of a rather amusing adventure.

Mme. du Portail, pretty, but extremely vain, took it into her head that she had made the conquest of the King and that only the want of a safe opportunity had prevented him from giving her convincing proof of this.

She was deluding herself with this delightful idea when at a masquerade ball she saw a man who, by his manners, his size and his voice, so resembled the King that her mistake might readily be forgiven her.

After having taken off her mask, she began to pursue and harass him: this man, who belonged to the King's guard and who knew her very well, took advantage of her error, and won all the advantages he desired.

This done, she dared return to the ball, much pleased with the embrace she thought she had received from the King; but the garde du corps, who did not consider himself obliged to respect a favour not intended for him and who thought the story too good not to be repeated, followed her in the hall and told it to all who wished to listen.

Some time after, the same person was involved in a much uglier affair: she was accused, together with her cook and her porter, of having conspired to poison her husband; this charge was not very closely looked into or the result might have been fatal to her.

Even the husband consented to hush the affair, but Mme. de Pompadour, who could not forgive her for still having aims on the King, took advantage of the scandal and secured a *lettre de cachet* which sent her into a cloister because of the suspicions against her.

Love alone saw to the liberation of Madame *la Présidente.*

There was in the service of Mme. de Pompadour a very rich wine merchant, named M. d'Arboulin, who had been in love with Mme. du Portail before her misfortune; believing that her present position would render her more favourable to his passion than she had been in her happier days, he made use of his influence with Mme. de Pompadour who, satisfied with her triumph, saw nothing dangerous to her favour in a woman forever disgraced in the public mind; she therefore with an air of commiseration granted the freedom of Mme. du Portail who, separated from her husband, rewarded the zeal of M. d'Arboulin and did not conceal her gratitude.

She lived publicly with him, saying to those who wished to listen that he had all that one could desire in a husband: *love and zeal,* without having the vices of the great: *deceitfulness and impotence.*

Such were the two women who had the honour of being presented to the King and the mortification of being refused; it is on this occasion that he became attached to Mme. d'Etiole.

CHAPTER III

When the King had tired of everything, when he had flown from object to object, he conceived a sudden disgust for the short flights of this nature.

He found that, far from giving vivacity to his enjoyments, they would end by perverting them, by corrupting them.

One evening when he was about to go to bed, he spoke of the matter to Binêt, his valet de chambre, and he informed him that he was tired of seeing new faces so frequently without finding one person worthy of holding him.

He asked him if he knew of no one who could answer to his wishes and who possessed sufficient merit to make him cease such changes.

Binêt, delighted at the confidence made to him by the King, assured him that he knew a person who would not fail to suit him, that this person was a relative of his, and that she had been in love with the King ever since she had had the good

fortune of seeing him for the first time, cherishing the tenderest sentiments for the person of His Majesty.

This reply excited the curiosity of the King, who asked him the name of that person; Binët tried to make him recall that he had seen her while on his hunting expeditions in the woods of Sénart and that he had already made inquiries about her.

The King, who remembered her very well, confessed that she had pleased him as much as it was possible to please, in spite of the attachment which then retained him near Mme. de Châteauroux; he added that he would be delighted to have a secret conference with her, and that he charged him with its arrangement.

Binet, with these instructions, went the next day to Mme. d'Etioles and told her what had taken place; she accepted with an eagerness equal to her ambition and all was settled at once to have her spend the night away from home without her husband taking umbrage at it.

At the appointed hour, Mme. d'Etioles was at the rendezvous; the King spent the night with her and sent her away the next morning with some

coldness: it was even some time before he mentioned the matter to Binet.

The grief of the confidant and the anger of the mistress may be imagined.

After having relied with so much confidence on the power of her charms, after both having laboured for so many years to build a beautiful castle in the air, it seemed to crumble; to be then reduced to fear that the enjoyment had made on the King's heart no impression sufficient to reawaken his desires, what a downfall! what a disgrace!

More than a month had passed in this indifference when one evening the King, again addressing Binet, laughingly asked him what had become of his relative and what she thought of him.

Binet told him that Mme. d'Etioles wept ceaselessly, that she thought only of His Majesty, that his image was continually present before her eyes awake or asleep.

"Is she weeping for her sin?" replied Louis XV. "To speak frankly," added the King, "I feared she might be like the others, solely possessed of ambition or interest, a passion much less noble

and more condemnable than the ambition of pleasing; besides, I may say that she pleased me; I also wanted to see what effect the marks of my apparent disdain would produce on her."

Binet was too good a courtier and the intrigue in which his personal interest was enlisted was too dear to him not to give the King all the assurances liable to rekindle his passion, and to dispell all his doubts.

He made him notice specially that interest, that vile passion of mercenary souls, had the less attraction for her because she happened to be in the most comfortable of circumstances; to which he added that all appearances led him to believe that she loved the King for himself alone, and that all other considerations had no place in her passion.

"Well," said the King, "if that is the case, I shall be delighted to see her again."

The visit met with no hindrances, the King saw her and, this second time, the interview had results very different from the first.

She so captivated him that it was with extreme impatience that he awaited another visit.

From that time he saw her every night until the

conquest was finally complete and he only lived for her.

Everyone believes that these happy successes were in part due to her mother's instructions.

That woman, initiated in all the mysteries of love affairs, an expert in the profession of infidelity, possessed to perfection the art of pleasing.

Mme. Poisson died shortly after having seen her daughter firmly established as a favourite and the great joy it caused her contributed to the shortening of her days.

She had laboured toward that end all her life.

Mme. d'Etioles, however, could not spend so many nights away from home without causing her husband some anxiety as to her way of living; it was not long before he was informed of his misfortune and of the love of him who was responsible for it.

As he loved his wife too much to be willing to share her with another, this discovery was a veritable thunderbolt for him.

Well resolved not to let matters remain as they were, he began to affect the tone of an offended person and to make use of the power of a husband.

This only hastened the carrying out of the measures taken by the King and Mme. d'Etioles; proud of a protection which was assured her, she boldly threw off the mask and, after having raised the enemies' colours, she did not hesitate to seek a place of refuge at Versailles.

Poor d'Etioles, abandoned by his wife, and always faithful and in love, cried out and filled the universe with his lamentations.

He had tried every means to make her return to her duty when he received a notice without *lettre de cachet,* which banished him to Avignon.

Compelled to obey, he betook himself to the place of his exile.

There, still desperately in love with his wife, he gave vent to such violent transports that he contracted a fever which put his life in danger; he escaped, however, thanks to the strength of his constitution and to the remonstrances of a few friends who succeeded in making him see how foolish it was to die for an ungrateful wife who, far from grieving at his death, would be the first to rejoice at it.

Twelve months spent at Avignon gave reflection ample time to produce its effect.

He calmed down and then laboured to have himself recalled to Paris; this he obtained easily on the promise he made to let matters go on as they were, to be satisfied with everything and not to think of seeing his wife again.

To this favour, if it may be called one, there were added other advantages sufficiently important to satisfy him; if property and riches can compensate for the loss of a person one loves.

The position given him in the finance department brought him more than four hundred thousand livres a year, besides being granted all he asked for his friends.

Although he never saw his wife, he still corresponded with her.

She had loved the theatres, as much as they had now become indifferent to her; at least she seldom attended there; when she felt like going to see a play, she did not fail to inform her husband, so as to avoid meeting him.

Two reasons caused her to do this: one was not

to attract the curious attention of the audience on her conduct in such a circumstance; the other might have been the shame of being compared with a husband whom she had so cruelly treated.

She had been warned that on the day she would appear, the public would grant applause to her husband: then since the favourite knows the natural disposition of the Parisian, why does she not act with greater caution?

Mme. d'Etioles seeing herself surrounded by enemies from the very day she made her entry at Court, as favourite, schooled and fortified herself against the dangers which encompassed her.

To please the King, to study his character, was her foremost occupation; shrewd and crafty as she was, she soon knew him thoroughly.

Taking advantage of her discoveries, she went about it so well that the King was convinced that he would never find a person with whom he could spend quieter or happier days.

She had fathomed the King's weakness in noticing that, with all the means at her disposal, not one was more sure than that of making him pass

the time: she formed a plan in connection with this discovery.

Kings, much more than other men, are exposed to becoming a prey to sadness and ennui.

The unfortunate faculty they have of procuring amusements for themselves, the extraordinary eagerness of a crowd of courtiers solely occupied in creating them, soon exhausts the supply, the spring dries up and the ill is without remedy; this is why we see when the middle of their careers is hardly reached that the majority of their pastimes have lost the merit of novelty.

One must have a very inventive mind to discover some that may have the good fortune of pleasing them; and even more so to restore the charm of novelty to those which enjoyment has already rendered flat and insipid, by knowing the manner of diversifying them with taste and always present them under a new form.

In these respects, Mme. d'Etioles was without doubt the person needed by the King.

His natural impatience increased the mortal ennui which devoured him in his idleness and made

him sigh for pastimes: could he find better than she to fill up the awful void the thought of which tormented him?

To the most touching charms of her person, seconded by all that a finished education can give, she combined an art, so necessary at Versailles, the art of trifling in a manner unknown to the King and the Court.

Her cleverness did not fail to give value to the smallest trifles; no one had so much grace as she in telling a story or the little events of the Court and of the city.

She sang, she played masterfully on almost any instrument; she danced with the air and that lightness of the nymph of which she possessed all the delicacy and agility; she excelled specially in the art of always displaying her attractions at the proper time and of setting them forward only at the favourable moment when they could be best appreciated.

Her penetration went so far as to discover the moment when each would cease to please: she did not wait for this.

Already the decorations were changed, and the

people were not yet over the surprise and admiration which they had excited.

With so much talent to please the King and his intimates, might she become the oracle of the whole Court and there play the character of a new *PETRONIUS ARBITRE!*

No entertainment was reputed such, if it were not of her invention, or if it had not merited the honour of her approbation.

Everything had to be *à la Pompadour* at those little suppers which the King liked so much and from which he had banished the stiffness of etiquette, in the midst of a few chosen persons who were then more his friends than his subjects.

Stripped of all the exterior show of royal majesty, he gave himself up wholly to seeing her give life to this voluptuous company, and diffuse through it the spirit of gaiety, for she was the soul and the life of all these little affairs; in a word, the King had so much reason to believe that she was necessary to the happiness of his days that his heart no longer felt the pleasures of inconstancy.

The impression was so great that nothing cost

too much when it was a question of proving his love.

We have seen the Bourbons spend much in magnificence; love has also succeeded at times in making prodigals of them; but generosity was never one of their personal virtues.

Louis *the Well-Beloved* is no exception to this general characteristic of his family.

Naturally inclined to saving, he had not been seen to reward the favours of his mistresses in the manner of a King; to Mme. d'Etioles and to her powerful influence it was left to raise the floodgates of the royal treasury and to cause its waters to flow over her and hers.

He first gave her a marquisate with the title of *Marquise de Pompadour.*

Poisson, who was her father only because he had married her mother, after having obtained his pardon before his daughter's favour, had been put in comfortable circumstances for the rest of his days.

Her brother, who was worthy of attention only because he was her brother at least on his mother's side, was made a Marquis de Vandière.[8]

The courtiers, by a slight change in this word, always called him M. le *Marquis d'Avant-hier* (Day before yesterday), a mockery which was the cause of his taking the title of Marquis de Marigny, the King's bounty having placed him in a position to buy the marquisate of that name.

Before that he had been director and General Superintendent of the buildings, gardens, arts and manufactories of the kingdom, an important post, the pay of which is very large.

All these dignities did not, however, give him the merit necessary to that place, specially when one considered the circumstances that had brought them to him; so that old Poisson, his father, could not help saying: "As to my daughter, she has intellect, she is beautiful, and she well deserves the King's consideration; but that the King should do so much for my son Charles, is an unpardonable act in my estimation."

Father Poisson was jealous of him.

It is true that the King in spite of his love could not help but make fun of Marigny.

Some courtiers spoke one day, in his presence, of the coming promotion of the chevaliers of orders;

they named a few whom they thought worthy of being honoured with the *cordon bleu*, and put young Poisson among them.

" No," said the King, " he is too little a *poisson* (fish) to wear the blue."

Such a sally could hardly be permitted to any one but the King, and never would one have dared to preserve it had any one else said it.

Mme. de Pompadour had managed to put the King in the humour of giving liberally and he acquired that habit.

It is not seldom that one sees people give away through habit and this habit is the more necessary towards persons of low origin because otherwise one immediately loses all the merit of what one has given, if one present does not bring another and if the last is not the guarantee of the one to follow.

When one notices the immense disproportion of his prodigalities, and of the object which they favoured, one is more inclined to consider them as a weakness of love than as the mark of a royal virtue, *of liberality*.

They were a river whose waters acquired more force from the narrowness of their bed and then rushed on with greater impetuosity.

She could at her pleasure dispose of the King's purse and she disposed of it pitilessly; besides the enormous sums which came from it to defray the expenses of the style of living into which she had launched him, she drew even larger amounts for herself.[9]

This money, added to that which she secured from the sale of her protection, from the distribution of offices and employment, from a thousand other means which the royal power placed in her hands, was incalculable; a part is to be found in the principal banks of Europe, the rest is more evident since it has been used in buildings and in the acquisition of so much property and so many châteaux.

In Paris she purchased a palace near the Tuileries, called l'Hôtel d'Evreux[10] and not finding it worthy of her, she had it torn down to build another in its place.

It was a terrible annoyance to the Parisians to

see the palace of a prince in the hands of the King's mistress, and of a mistress come from the scum of the people.

When the sign on which was the name of the old hôtel was taken down to be replaced by that of Pompadour, the walls of the palace were covered with lampoons, with bitter verses, and piquant satires which sufficiently showed the sentiments of the nation; a circumstance came to increase the rage of the people: it broke out.

Le Cours is a place where the nobility and persons of note drove in their coaches.

To enlarge the gardens of the hôtel, a part of this beautiful drive was taken, an act which was looked upon as a robbery of the public.

She was authorised to do this by the King's consent; nevertheless, the populace gathered and fell on the labourers charged with the building of the wall which was to surround the property; it was necessary to call the guard, to protect them from all subsequent insults.

The palace which she had at Versailles was magnificent: she had not purchased it for herself; residing at the château, she had no need of it, but

she had to have room for her numerous *entourage;* besides this the King gave her for life the royal château of Crécy.

There was indecency no doubt in making such use of the property of the Crown; everyone grumbled.

That was not all: Mme. de Pompadour took the whim one day of having a country house: the King at once gave orders to have built that magnificent house which stands on the road to Versailles, near Sèvres and Meudon, which was called *Belle-Vue* [11] because of the charming view offered by the horizon and the delightful surroundings: this site had fascinated the senses and tempted the cupidity of the favourite.

To surround it with gardens, several landowners were tyrannically forced to give up their land, at whatever price they were offered.

This oppression must necessarily have crowned the feelings of the people, who already saw only with the greatest regret the enormous sums lavished on the favourite.

Yet there must have been almost insurmountable difficulties in taking incessantly from her lover

without betraying a mercenary soul possessed by the most sordid interest: the superior genius of Mme. de Pompadour encountered none.

With a character both insinuating and capable of stooping to everything, with talents suitable to the making of a fortune on the stage or at Court, what did it cost her to affect any character she wished?

Without ever seeming to ask, she always obtained all and never did any one better act the part of disinterestedness in favour of interest; but if she did not love the King, or if she believed that she loved him, was there not in this a baseness of soul unknown to true passion, to always lay under contribution a person loved; to take advantage of his weakness to obtain from him things liable to blemish his reputation and ruin him?

She could not excuse herself by pretending ignorance; the knowledge of the motives that made her act, the loud clamours of the people, which must necessarily have reached her, but too clearly told her of the injury she did him, to believe that

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[illegible]

she could know nothing of it; but her heart was without pity as was her love.

She only had enough compassion to save appearances and if she had had love, this noble passion would not have failed to oppose itself to her aims; it would have left her less liberty in making use of artifice: however worn that cloak may have been, she always successfully covered herself with it.

Kings are, of all men, those most subject to being deceived; it would seem that they are born solely to be the dupes of flattery.

In the matter of love specially, nothing is so easy to deceive them; proud and jealous of the rank they occupy, too often do they attribute to their personal merit the lucky successes that are due only to their station.

So the King continued his entanglement with Mme. de Pompadour; he had become accustomed to her and the bounties with which he overwhelmed her completed what their relations could not: it is one of the peculiarities of the human heart that the one who gives always increases by giving, the

degrees of sentiment which he has for the person who receives; it may be noticed here: the more Pompadour received, the more dear she became in the eyes of the King.

Versailles is, as everyone knows, one of the most magnificent palaces in Europe; but it is the least fit to dwell in.

It might be thought that it has only been possible to establish its magnificence at the expense of its comfort; nothing is more inconvenient than the disposition of the apartments, which are few and very mediocre.

The Queen herself and Mesdames de France are badly off for room there; the chief officers of the Court find themselves compelled to dwell in entresols.

As to the apartments of Mme. de Pompadour, they were on the ground-floor, immediately below those of the King, to which they were not one bit inferior; a private staircase led from her sleeping room to that of the King, so that they could see one another without being compelled to go through other apartments.

So many marks of distinction must of necessity

have attracted to the one who received them, a multitude of enemies; were it for no other reason than envy in a Court, specially where that passion is capable of producing an effect similar and perhaps a greater one if some personal merit came to give more force to its rancour.

But there was no necessity of envy entering into this matter: there were well-founded motives of dissatisfaction.

Let us pass over the scandal; it could not be greater in a Court accustomed for a long time to this sort of thing.

But could people see without indignation, a family, as vile as it was unknown, take precedence of the most distinguished nobility, and be overwhelmed with countless bounties?

All France groaned over it and the King's faithful friends, those who were most attached to him, were the first to show their vexation.

The courtiers even, that cowardly crew which at Versailles has not a single decent sentiment, since a slave to the master that governs it, it dares not think otherwise than he, the courtiers, I say, although pride is easily allied to baseness, con-

sidered themselves offended to creep at the feet of an idol beneath them, and sought to avenge themselves by increased contempt and hatred against her and against her family; in a word, dissatisfaction was general, and Mme. de Pompadour almost became its victim; the event which it seemed would blight her career and which then created much noise is too worthy of attention to allow it to be passed in silence: here are a few particulars.

There was a certain Mme. Sauvé, wife of a clerk in the office of M. d'Argenson, secretary of State in the war department, who was in the service of Mme. de Tallard, *gouvernante* of Monseigneur le Duc de Bourgogne, elder son of Monseigneur le Dauphin, and who was then but a child.

One day when the young prince was to be shown to the people who came in crowds to see him, she happened to be away, and the child was put in a cradle exposed within a wire lattice to protect him from the discomfort or danger which might be feared from an eager crowd.

When the crowd had withdrawn, Mme. Sauvé approached the cradle and on raising the prince,

she uttered an exclamation caused by a sealed package which she said she found there.

This package was addressed to the King, who received it from Mme. de Tallard, to whom she had been careful to give it at once.

It was opened and besides a few verses and grains of wheat which made allusion to the dearth then existing, there was found a letter filled with bitter complaints against the King, against his government and specially against his scandalous life with Mme. de Pompadour.

He was threatened with a new Ravaillac if he did not change his conduct and if he were not more careful of his people.

Although the incident caused the King to break out into a violent anger, he was much less sensitive to the contents of the letter than he was to the manner in which it had reached him.

Mme. de Pompadour knew that d'Argenson entertained against her a mortal hatred. He had been frank or indiscreet enough to openly express his opinion of her; and it was only by a sort of miracle that in spite of her power, he had succeeded

in retaining his position and the good graces of his master.

Suspicion did not fail to fall on him; and she did not fail to tell the King; she had sufficient clues to confirm her suspicions.

The hatred of d'Argenson was open: Mme. Sauvé was not only the wife of one of his clerks, but besides she was suspected of being his mistress; in a word, she succeeded in making the thing so plausible that the King believed in good faith that he had solved the mystery; he went so far as to give non-equivocal signs of his lively feelings to his minister d'Argenson, but while discrediting this minister, she almost blighted her fortune herself.

The Queen, the ministers, almost all the Court, took sides against her.

There was but one opinion: that the whole affair was a ruse of her malice, that she herself, through her agents, had done the deed, to ruin an innocent party whose only crime was not to think better of her than she deserved.

The clamours, as loud as they were unanimous, shook the King's constancy, in spite of the great partiality he had for her.

Mme. Sauvé, who had found the package or who claimed to have found it, was carefully and rigorously examined; the replies she made only served to render the affair more obscure and complicated.

When she was asked how it was possible for anyone to place a package in a cradle enclosed within a wire lattice, near which she was, without her noticing the person who had done so, she replied that at the moment when she thought that the package had been slipped in the cradle, she had felt someone press her hand; but that in the crowd, she had looked on this as the action of a person who sought to approach the cradle as closely as possible, or who seized anything he could, in fear of being thrown down.

She added that even had there been occasion to fear something extraordinary, the move had been so rapid and the throng so great that it would have been impossible for her to recognise anyone.

She was answered that so singular a circumstance as that of feeling one's hand pressed should have caused her anxiety; that in default of presence of mind sufficient to discover the person who

had done this, she should have called for help from the sentinel, which she had neglected to do.

Still everything was well, if her conduct had not served to confirm the suspicions existing against her.

On the very day this had taken place, she said to her servant on going to bed that the person who had slipped the package in the cradle would not be content until she had caused her death, because she must be living in the continuous fear of seeing herself discovered sooner or later and arrested; but that she wished to tear herself from all anxiety on that score and escape from the anguish which tormented her by killing herself.

The servant used all her eloquence to make her renounce such a design and Mme. Sauvé pretended to give in to her remonstrances; but as soon as she had left, she swallowed some poison: the loud cries she uttered caused the servant to hasten back, and she, seeing what her mistress had done, aroused the entire house.

At first remedies were resorted to; the counter-poison which was given to her would have rendered useless a poison much more strong than the

one she had swallowed: thus was her life saved; but something so exaggerated was noticed in her manners, and such affectation, that all together it gave new strength to the suspicions against her; she was arrested and conducted to the Bastille, from which she never came out.

It is not known to what examination she had to submit in that prison, what torments she was made to suffer, what knowledge was secured from her, and if she was executed there or not; one thing certain is that she was never heard of from that time.

Her husband had fled, at the first news of her arrest, but he soon returned after having sufficiently justified himself.

It is to be believed that M. d'Argenson was wholly innocent, since the storm that threatened him passed over so fast that he regained the King's former confidence.

Perhaps it is exaggerating suspicion to let it fall on Mme. de Pompadour, but if she was guilty, the suppression of the proceeding against the Sauvé woman and the favour which she continued to obtain can only be attributed to the power she had

over the mind of the King, an ascendency which left him neither the wish to punish nor the power to abandon her.

However such weakness wherein injustice has so large a part is so unbelievable that one can not resist the desire to believe her innocent.

This storm had only shaken her to strengthen her, it had barely passed over when the King was more in love with her than ever.

Soon the entire Court felt the influence which she had on all which was done.

No mistake was more severely punished than a slightest lack of respect towards a woman whom the King delighted in honouring.

Thus had she every reason in the world for triumphing, and for congratulating herself for having discovered and chosen the only way existing to captivate the King and assure his conquest to herself.

It is to be wished, for the happiness of humanity, that her secret be better known and her example followed more than it is, without, however, its being put to an evil use.

However great might be the danger to which

men might then be exposed, women would profit infinitely and their designs would always be crowned with success.

This secret consisted solely in comprehending the humour of the King, and to make it a business to conform to it wholly; to this was due that he nowhere else found greater delight than in her company.

Such a means will always give greater and more powerful advantages than that ordinary obstinacy of wishing to have one's own way.

Faithful to this maxim, Mme. de Pompadour had made the happy experience of its solidity.

Hardly had she lived a few years with the King in the position of mistress when she found herself unable to fulfil what is ordinarily looked upon as the essential point of that position; an ailment to which her sex is subject attacked her with such force that to avoid the dangerous consequences which were to be feared, the King was compelled, by advice of the doctors, to discontinue all commerce with her, and, however hard the renunciation may have appeared to him, no desire could resist against the thought of his mistress' ailment

and against the fear of feeling the effects of its outcome.

What a triumph for Pompadour in the critical state in which she was.

She had the pleasure of seeing that her favour was founded on something more solid than the momentary attractions of her person.

She was then able to know how advantageous it was for her to have been able to bind her slave with so many chains that even when breaking that which seemed the strongest, he was not one step nearer to liberty.

All the Court and no doubt she herself was astonished to see her still possess the King's heart, under circumstances which naturally might have inspired indifference or disgust.

Yet many motives could conspire in making him keep his shackles.

The King's dominant passion for pastimes which could find most satisfaction only with her; the ordinary company of princes where one notices that favour produces presents, these presents a new favour, and these new degrees of favour additional presents; custom; a certain spirit of con-

tradiction which is pleased to disappoint the expectations of others; the extraordinary side of a thing, and still more perhaps the false pride of the human heart which persists in an error because it fears to give, in renouncing it, an evidence of its weakness, all these foibles explained this moral paradox so that people were no longer astonished to see him in chains.

Far from having formed the project of freeing himself, the King seemed to cherish his bondage the more.

M. de Maurepas was one of the first who allowed himself to be deceived by appearances; he was also one of its first victims.

Besides being minister of State, he had moreover the honour of being of the number of intimate courtiers in the King's good graces; he had been, as one might say, brought up with him, and hardly had he reached majority, when he was given employment in State affairs.

On a fête day at Court, Mme. de Pompadour presented to the King a bouquet of white roses, which was told with other news of the day, to M. de Maurepas, while he was dressing; but he began

to laugh and said that he had often thought that sooner or later Mme. de Pompadour would make a present of *fleurs blanches* to the King.

This allusion was eagerly taken up by some persons who happened to be present and it spread through the whole Court.

The thought was put into verse and it was attributed to M. de Maurepas.

No insult could be more sharp to Mme. de Pompadour, her anger was extreme and the King shared her feelings: from that day M. de Maurepas lost both his office and his favour, and according to all appearances he lost them forever; for in nothing is the King's character more decided than in never returning to those whom he has once punished and abandoned.

The example of Chauvelin can furnish a model of this stern and inflexible character: this able minister whom the King much esteemed, was disgraced out of kindness for Cardinal de Fleury; vainly did he show that he had done no wrong, he never succeeded in being restored to favour.

To send away M. de Maurepas was too serious a matter and of too great importance for those re-

sponsible for his removal not to colour their conduct; they dared not declare the real motives; so, some malversation was alleged, some negligence in the department of the navy where he occupied the office of minister and secretary of State.

The people, who did not admit of there being any truth in that, all murmured the louder on seeing that motives as powerful had been unable to do what was reserved to the animosity of Pompadour to accomplish; moreover, at Court, one is much less exposed to become the victim of one's crimes than of one's virtues.

To hate Mme. de Pompadour was looked upon as a virtue.

Maurepas was not the only one who gave an example of the danger there was in offending her.

M. de Rességuier, Knight of Malta and an officer in the King's guards, was still more unfortunate.

He had written a quatrain against her wherein the King's weakness was so little spared, that it might have been said with reason that he had been punished for having spoken ill of His Majesty, if on that occasion the King had not boasted to his

mistress that he had only avenged a personal insult.

The contents of this quatrain [12] practically said that a King who lowered himself to raise from nothingness the vilest person in the world to honour her with his love, could be only susceptible of baseness.

The Chevalier de Rességuier was at once suspected of being its author.

On suspicion, his absence from home was chosen to send guards to his house; a search was made and what was sought was found.

A rough draft full of erasures and in his own handwriting was used against him and served to prove that he was the author of the piece.

If they had but found a clean copy, although in his handwriting, it would have proved nothing against him; he could have excused himself by saying that it was but a copy; but an original, and an original with corrections was a proof that could not be eluded; he was condemned to spend his days in the narrow iron cage of Mont Saint-Michel: a punishment a thousand times greater than death.

This cage is a square in which the prisoner can

neither stand nor lie down: he can assume no other position than that of sitting and he remains seated continually.

He spent seven years in this uncomfortable and unhappy state and earnest prayers of the Order of Malta brought no other relief than a transfer to the prison of the Château de Pierre-Encize, where he was able to stretch and make use of his limbs.

He had not long been in his new prison, when, can one believe it! Mme. de Pompadour, priding herself of nobleness of soul, secured his freedom, with permission to return to Malta.

He lost only the post he had held in the army; and it was generally reported that before leaving the kingdom, he went to Mme. de Pompadour to thank her: a step which made him unworthy of the pity which his sufferings had brought him, even at Court.

We have said that Mme. de Pompadour having become an invalid, was not in a condition to perform her duties; this did not hinder her from being jealous of the King, so little was she disposed to do justice to herself.

A glance, a look, the least sign that a person pleased him, all worried her and although she strove to dissipate her trouble, she always allowed some anxiety to be seen.

When Mme. de Brionne came to the Court for the first time, it was thought that it was not without the design of pleasing the King, who from then set his mind on that new and young beauty.[13]

One evening, seeing that charming object, while at supper, he said with some transport, in the presence of Pompadour, that he had never seen so beautiful a person, a statement that threw the favourite into the most cruel anxiety.

So as to immediately forestall what she feared, she was careful to insinuate to Prince Charles de Lorraine (he is not the Emperor's brother) that the virtue of his nephew's wife was in the greatest danger.

The prince, very strict in matters of honour, did not rest until he had persuaded his nephew, M. de Brionne, to have his wife leave Court at once.

The reader has seen, in the course of this history, Mme. de Pompadour busy filling her strong-

coffers with all the greediness natural to the condition from which the King had drawn her, since she was the wife of a financier.

She would have considered herself but half satisfied if she had stopped at love.

She had to betray the baseness of her origin by that pride and that vanity by which it is so easy to recognise her; she had too much intelligence to be ignorant of what there was against her in her own extraction; and she had not enough to see that the title of mistress to the King, far from covering anything, only gave more prominence to her origin.

She did not notice that in giving herself so much trouble to place herself in a position which she considered too much above contempt, she only laboured to give a more certain signal at which everyone assembled; either these reflections were beyond her or, what is more reasonable, she was constrained to bend before the natural littleness of her passions.

It would be an endless tale should we report the evidences which she has given of a pride that has so often been the object of the Court's laughter and

specially of those of the courtiers who showed the most complacency to conform to it: a few examples will be sufficient.

Nothing can better show the high opinion she had of herself than the etiquette which she had introduced while in favour in the room wherein she received her visits, when she was at her *toilette,* where she would never allow any but her own arm-chair.

It was a sort of favour she granted the King, when he came to see her, to give him a chair; as for the princes of the blood, the cardinals, and a few other persons of highest distinction, not daring to sit down in their presence without offering them a seat, for she did not believe she could do it with impunity, she received them standing and only sat down the moment they withdrew.

The Marquis de Souvré being one day at her *toilette* and not finding a chair, sat down on the arm of her arm-chair and continued to converse as before.

Mme. de Pompadour, enraged at the familiarity, gave vent to an attack of fury and went to com-

plain to the King of the outrage suffered at the hands of Souvré.

"Sire," said the marquis, "I was devilish tired, and not knowing where to sit, I did the best I could."

This unceremonious reply made the King laugh and as he was fortunate enough to be a sort of favourite, the affair was carried no further; otherwise a sad experience would have been sure to teach him that one does not sit with impunity on the arm of the arm-chair of Pompadour.

A similar experience happened to Prince de Bauffremont.

Wishing to give herself the airs of a *grande princesse,* and have a gentleman in her service, Pompadour chose a young man of one of the best and oldest families of Guienne, named d'Inville, and everybody was at a loss to decide which of the two surpassed the other, the mistress in vanity or the young nobleman in baseness.

She had a maître d'hôtel named Collin and she did not think him worthy of waiting on her without the decoration of the *cordon* of some order.

Few princesses would have conceived such an idea: but she was of a different condition from those to whom the rights of blood give the most eminent qualities.

She not only conceived that idea, but her influence with the King succeeded in having it carried out and Collin was made master of accounts of the royal and military order of Saint-Louis.

This order has been instituted in favor of land and naval officers who have distinguished themselves by their valor or by the length of their services.

Collin, plain servant, and nothing more, had consequently no quality which entitled him to enter it.

It is true that the office of master of accounts did not make him a chevalier of Saint-Louis; but it produced almost the same effect by permitting him to wear the cross and the other insignias of the order.

So Mme. la Marquise de Pompadour, in whose eyes appearance was always worth reality, had the satisfaction of seeing behind her chair what seemed

to be a chevalier of Saint-Louis, with his cross, and a napkin under his arm.

Had she wished to cast ridicule on the order, she could not have done better than she had done.

It is thus that the government, to bring discredit on Chinese linen, which was sold to us by the English to ruin our own manufactories, ordered under Louis XIV that the executioner should wear a garment made of it every time he hanged someone.

CHAPTER IV

Her vanity growing with her credit, there was nothing else to content her but the honours of the Louvre; these honours consist principally in taking the *tabouret,* in remaining seated in the presence of the Queen, and in being presented to receive a kiss from her.

It was of this that the ceremony of installation consisted.

There was a very great indiscretion on the part of Mme. de Pompadour in making such a request; she should not have overlooked her birth, nor the feelings of the Queen towards her, and she could easily imagine that she would not see her with pleasure.

However, an excess of kindness did not permit this virtuous princess to oppose the King's will; all bowed to the orders and to the superior credit of the candidate, all gave way, even Court etiquette, which accords this prerogative to duchesses only;

MARIE LECZINSKA AND THE DAUPHIN

for she replied to objections that her position of mistress to the King was the basis of her pretensions, acting on the example of Mme. de Montespan, who had obtained the same honours from Louis XIV.

She assured that there was nothing criminal in her relations with the King; that all amounted to *a platonic love,* to a communion of mind and sentiment, and no one was found impolite enough to say that her continency was too little voluntary to be advanced in her favour.

All, however, was not wholly satisfactory in her success.

In the midst of her triumph, she underwent mortifications which please so much at courts; she was presented to the Dauphin to be kissed, according to the rules of etiquette, and the Dauphin, who detested her, while presenting a cheek to be kissed, stuck out his tongue, and gave other evidence of the contempt he had for her.

La Pompadour could not see it, but was soon informed of it; she almost died with rage, and in her transport, she hastened to the King to tell him.

She related the shameful way in which she had

been received, and did not fail to present it under the most hideous features and blackest colours her passion could suggest; lastly she gave the King to understand that she was resolved to leave the Court rather than see herself exposed to such insults.

The King, full of anger against the Dauphin, considered that to fail in respect toward Mme. de Pompadour was to fail toward himself.

He espoused this quarrel and the next day, when the Dauphin was preparing to pay his court, he sent him orders to betake himself to his château of Meudon.

The Queen, the ministers, almost all the Court, begged in his favour; the King remained unbending, he would listen to no arrangement but on the condition that the Dauphin should go in person to Mme. de Pompadour to deny publicly what was charged against him.

The Dauphin yielded: he declared in the presence of several persons that what had been reported of him was false and that he had not done any of the things imputed against him.

La Pompadour received this declaration as the

most gracious princess might have done; she replied to it with the same truth that she had placed no faith on what had been told her on the subject.

Mme. de Pompadour carried her goodness so far as to engrave the portrait of the Dauphin: such was the ending of this comic scene.

The Dauphin was condemned for having lowered himself to such an extent, but those who condemned him did not perhaps consider the double obligation imposed on him in his capacity of son and subject.

If there was a mistake in this punishment, it was without doubt much less great in the one who obeyed than in the one who ordered it.

La Pompadour having thus succeeded in obtaining the honours of the Louvre, was not yet satisfied: puffed up by her success, she became more enterprising, she thought she could employ her influence in making new endeavours, she took it into her head to be a lady of the palace of the Queen: an honour granted only to ladies most distinguished by birth, rank and dignity.

The Queen had surrendered without resistance in the matter of honours of the Louvre; but she

would have seemingly lost all feeling had she seen herself forced, with indifference, to receive in her house a person so disagreeable to her; however, she made no other remonstrances than those which might be reconciled with her extreme compliance to the King's will; remonstrances which she thought sufficient, since they were limited by the King's absolute will.

Therefore laying aside all the other reasons she had, very just reasons, but on that account more liable to displease the King, she contented herself with saying with a courageous sweetness, "that there would be too much impropriety in her to grant this place to a person who lived in a fraudulent separation from her husband, and who did not even dare to approach the altars to receive communion; that she, on her part, had nothing to say on the innocence of her relations and of her *liaisons* with the King; but that this in no way repaired the breach which Mme. de Pompadour was making to her reputation, since, although married, she lived as if she were not, and did not fulfil any of the duties of a wife, who should be nowhere but in her husband's house."

She added: "That His Majesty might order what he pleased, that she would always make it her duty to obey; but that she hoped that he himself would have too much consideration for the royal family to do them so great an affront; that the place in question demanded an honour too little ambiguous and too delicate to have it given to an excommunicated person who did not even lay claim to the general benefit of the Easter communion."

The King, who, on the one hand, hesitated to displease the Queen and to reverse an order once laid down, but who, on the other, could not make up his mind to refuse Mme. de Pompadour, was cruelly perplexed as to what to do; he saw no means to remove the Queen's objection, whose full weight and force he felt.

Mme. de Pompadour, herself, in spite of the fertility of her genius, considered herself without resources towards an obstacle which appeared to her insurmountable; what was she to do in this plight?

In reality, while she continued to live separated from her husband, she dared not go to the altar to receive the Sacrament at Easter.

Two pressing reasons forbade her to go near it: the fear of being repulsed in a manner but little agreeable, or else the displeasure of hearing the world cry out against the profanation; and what profanation! the most cruel and the most unpardonable of all: a profanation inspired by pride and carried out by irreligion.

Such audacity had not proved a success with the Regent.

The road was then closed to her hopes; if she returned to her husband, to a man of little importance, this step would not help her.

The simple wife of M. d'Etioles could not aspire to the honour of becoming lady of the palace.

However, the shame she had at her failure, already known by the courtiers, had caused a pleasure so extreme to her enemies that it did not a little increase her grief and anxiety.

The King expressed all the sorrow at this and the Court all the imaginable joy.

Yet, however insurmountable the obstacles may have appeared, Mme. de Pompadour finally found a way to raise them: she wrote a letter to her husband, M. d'Etioles, a letter in the penitent Magda-

len style, in which she assured him: that she had grieved over the injustice of which she had been guilty towards him, and that she sincerely repented of all the irregularity of her life.

" I admit my wrongs," she said to him; " I wish to repair them. Already has the capital point of my wrongdoing ceased, all I need do is to make the appearances cease, a thing I ardently wish; I am resolved by my future conduct to efface all irregular acts in my past life.

" Take me back, and you will see me solely occupied in edifying by the harmony in which I shall live with you, the world which I have been scandalizing by my separation."

While she was writing this letter, the Prince de Soubise betook himself to M. d'Etioles and informed him that in a few hours he would receive a letter from Mme. de Pompadour, that in truth, he might do what he pleased, there existed no intention of forcing his resolution, since on the contrary it was desired that his reply be wholly free; but that he advised him, as a friend, not to accept the offers contained in the letter; that if he did he would not fail to displease the King; so that he had

better carefully consider what he would do in that circumstance.

To give more weight to this advice, he was handed an ordinance from the King containing an increase in his remuneration; this increase was very important.

M. d'Etioles, in whom time and reflection had succeeded in extinguishing his strong passion for his wife; M. d'Etioles, who, having yielded to reason, had at least changed his love for indifference and contempt; M. d'Etioles, who can not have been ignorant of what all the world knew, I mean that the condition of his wife rendered her as useless to him as she was to the King; M. d'Etioles, in short, well known in a circle of mistresses, would have been much embarrassed to take her back, even had less entreaties been made, and even if his refusal had not been so well paid; besides, perhaps, he was very glad to have a good opportunity to avenge himself in some manner on the King by leaving on his hands the useless and inconvenient piece of furniture which the prince had taken away from him at a time when he might say with reason that he would not have her back.

He excused himself from doing what was asked of him only enough to increase the merit of his complacency and to save the too great appearances of his contempt towards a person from whom he might hope and fear all; in a word, Prince de Soubise had reason to be satisfied with his commission.

M. d'Etioles therefore received the letter of Mme. de Pompadour, as foreseen, and answered according to the instructions received.

First he congratulated her for having returned to sentiments more worthy of her; he then expressed to her the excess of sadness into which he had been plunged by her separation from him; he said that the wound caused by this separation was too deep to be cured, that however he forgot her wrongs, and sincerely forgave her them, but that he had made the resolution never to live with her, that he would never take her back, and that she was mistaken if she expected him to do so.

Although worded in terms the most measured, the most polite and the most respectful, the refusal was clear and as clear as one might have wished it.

Armed with this documentary evidence, a copy of the letter she had written and of the answer from her husband, she went to inform of the matter all those who were interested in all that concerned her.

She had sinned, it is true, but she had repented also. She could no longer be reproached for not living with her husband since she was not to blame for not returning to him; she had offered to do so, but had been refused.

So that instead of one bishop she found twenty prepared to grant her full indulgence and to conduct her themselves to the altars to partake of the mysteries of religion through communion.

The Jesuits alone split in their opinion of the matter, well recalling what had happened in the times of Louis XIV.

This intrigue, wherein religion was so openly tricked, deceived no one as to the truth; but it had its full effect, the principal obstacle which prevented her from walking in the Queen's entourage was thrown down, and this princess, accustomed to give in, no longer offered any opposition; she contented herself with saying laughingly:

"I did not think it proper to allege my reasons and my silence has authorised you to take away my pretext."

All well-intentioned people at Court sighed at this new evidence of the boundless power and ambition of the marquise; yet it must be avowed that she always acted towards the Queen with all the respect and submission due her.

It was impossible for her to act otherwise; she was acquainted with the feelings of the King and consequently knew that his delicacy would infallibly be offended at the slightest shadow of an insult to the Queen, either one way or the other; she was aware that all her influence could not shelter her from his just displeasure, should the Queen happen to complain of her.

CHAPTER V

Before succeeding in the matter of her installation in the place of lady of the palace, Mme. de Pompadour had conceived the idea of negotiating with the clergy for an absolution, so as to be able to take communion at Easter and to give the Queen in that respect all the satisfaction that princess might desire, when she asked that Mme. de Pompadour, according to etiquette, should be obliged to prove that she was a Christian and performed the duties of her religion.

To obtain an absolution was not a very difficult matter for Mme. de Pompadour: there was no lack of ecclesiastics in Paris inclined to grant her one; but Mme. de Pompadour did not wish the absolution of an obscure confessor: she knew that people would not fail to say at Court as well as in the capital what had been said of the Regent, in a simliar circumstance, when he took communion in his parish, at Saint-Eustache.

She was besides very well informed on the general principles of Christianity and on the obligations imposed on her by religion: she had reason to fear that the people might cry out at the sacrilege on the very day she took communion; and it is well assured that had she given herself that permission with solemnity and without having a very well-known confessor, a thousand protests, a thousand couplets would have sung of the penitent, the absolution, and the *tabouret.*

Mme. de Pompadour, who saw rather clearly in that respect, conceived the idea of having a confessor in the grand style, to have him *en titre,* and to take him as the King did, from among the Jesuits, whose most honourable prerogative consisted in France in directing the conscience of the Kings, or at least to have the right to do so, and the title as confessors.

Mme. de Pompadour did not calculate ill on the responsibility attached to an absolution in negotiating for it with the Jesuits; through this she transferred to a celebrated, powerful and accredited Order, all the culpability resulting from an indulgence of this nature.

The Prince de Soubise, her go-between, charged himself both with the choice and with the preliminary negotiations: he chose for this affair Father de Sacy and went after him at the Central House.

Father de Sacy was a very remarkable personage in his Society, for the gentleness of his character and for his principles, which were opposed to severity.

He was of noble extraction and after having been called to several distinguished offices in his Company, he had become *procureur général* of the missons.

Prince de Soubise made him perceive that from the confessional of Mme. de Pompadour to that of the King there was but a step and that his complacency for Mme. de Pompadour was a preparatory measure in the direction of the conscience of Louis XV.

Father de Sacy consented to see Mme. de Pompadour and to seek for a way to conciliate the respect which she expressed for her duties with the practice of religion.

If this transaction had been possible, Mme. de

Pompadour would have opposed to the devout and Jesuistic court of the Queen, composed of Father Griffet, Cardinal de Luynes, the Bishop of Verdun, and M. de Nicolay, another court also Jesuistic and devout, and thus shut off the everlasting talk of the Dauphin and of the party of devout persons who incessantly bantered the bourgeois and libertine tone of Mme. de Pompadour.

Therefore did the devout faction feel all that there was of artifice and audacity in the politics of Mme. de Pompadour, and Father de Sacy became a new cause of worry for them.

Father de Sacy himself was not ignorant of the dangers of his position; he frequently saw Mme. de Pompadour, but instead of speaking of solemn confession and of absolution, uncertainties, disquieting delays, numerous visits were the sole reasons which the casuist opposed to the entreaties of Mme. de Pompadour.

The growing ambition of the favourite which made her earnestly wish for a prompt absolution was far from pleased with these evasions.

Father de Sacy, in truth, refused nothing in his

conferences, to Mme. de Pompadour; but on the other hand he promised nothing.

The uncertainty as to whether he would decide favourably or otherwise, to an absolution, grieving and irritating the secret and natural impatience of Mme. de Pompadour, she combined all her means and efforts to express her impatience and resentment against the delays of the confessor who daily claimed to be restrained by the consideration which he had to observe towards his Order and by the rules of the Church, which he had to weigh scrupulously.

In the meantime there was a rumour in Paris that Father de Sacy visited Mme. de Pompadour frequently, that he confessed her, and that he had with her conversations that were both secret and serious.

The rumour became so persistent that it was soon decided throughout the capital that these visits were improper for a man of the cloth.

All the Jesuits in Paris, all persons distinguished for religious sentiments and piety, blamed the conduct of Father de Sacy; he himself made a statement to his Company as to how far he had

gone with Mme. de Pompadour, and he received from his superiors the order to discontinue his visits, to explain to Mme. de Pompadour the duties of a conscientious confessor, in such a circumstance, and to excuse himself as best he could for having trifled with her for so long a time.

"The absolution which you desire can not be granted you, Madame," said Father de Sacy to her; "your sojourn at the Court, away from your husband, the public rumours regarding the favour granted you by the King, do not permit you to approach the holy table, nor consequently to receive absolution: the priest who would give it to you, instead of absolving you, would pronounce a double condemnation: yours and his, while the public, accustomed to judge of the conduct of those in prominent places, would confirm it without appeal.

"You wish, Madame, so you have told me, to perform the duties of a good Christian; but example is the chief of these; and to obtain an absolution and deserve it, the first thing for you to do is to return to M. d'Etioles or at least to leave the Court and to satisfy your neighbour since he de-

clares himself scandalised at your separation from your husband."

Mme. de Pompadour, on hearing herself told that it was necessary to abandon the King, return to M. d'Etioles and leave the Court to deserve and obtain an absolution which she craved only to triumph over the Queen and Monseigneur le Dauphin's party, as a lady of the palace, suddenly gave vent to all her fury and broke out in abuse against the Jesuit, who was of a cool and gentle character: his natural timidity had been the cause of his being careful of both religion and the King's mistress.

But as the mistresses of our princes are all imperious and as they desire to find in courtiers, either an expressive hatred to give themselves the pleasure of punishing them, or else a devotion *à toute épreuve,* to make use of it, Mme. de Pompadour, in the madness of her resentment, replied in about these terms to Father de Sacy:

" Father, you are an ignoramus, a knave and a true Jesuit; do you understand me? You have taken advantage of the embarrassment and of the need in which you thought I was.

"You would like, I know it, to see me away from the King; but I am in my position as powerful as you believe me unsteady and feeble; and in spite of all the Jesuits in the world, I shall remain at Court."

The poor Jesuit, much frightened, was dismissed at once.

Mme. de Pompadour later united herself with M. de Choiseul to contrive with him the means which were to hasten the ruin of the Jesuits and obtain it from a weak monarch who loved them.

By resorting to the sacraments, she had wanted to disarm the Dauphin's party or that of the Jesuits, still powerful at Court: the means she had tried not having been successful, she resolved the ruin of a party which she feared and with which she could not negotiate an agreement.

CHAPTER VI

The power of the party of devout persons at Court was still balanced by the power of the favourite's party or of free-thinkers.

Comte de Stainville (since Duc de Choiseul), with a character full of daring, independence and ambition, of illustrious birth, but without fortune, sought a way of making one by attaching himself to the favourite.

The weaknesses of the King for Mme. de Choiseul, his cousin, supplied the opportunity: this lady having communicated to him a confession of love written in the hand of Louis XV and having asked him how she should act in such a circumstance, M. de Stainville, who had a very sharp eye, judged spontaneously that the actual credit of Mme. de Pompadour was more solid and more profitable for him than that of his cousin, which was yet to be established.

Stainville therefore asked her to entrust to him

that letter of Louis XV so as to quietly think over a reply: Mme. de Choiseul turns over that letter to Stainville, who shows it to Mme. de Pompadour, who is consumed with jealousy against Mme. de Choiseul.

Mme. de Pompadour has the merit of knowing how to appreciate services of this nature and to reward those who have rendered them.

Flattered at the preference which M. de Stainville had shown her in this occurrence, to the prejudice of his cousin, she attached to herself this new creature and promised to assist him in his advancement.

It is known that M. de Choiseul was first sent to Rome as King's ambassador.

Having reached his post, he received from the cardinals and from the generals of the Order, the customary visits.

The general of the Jesuits did not fail in his duty: he even haunted the ambassy, so that M. de Stainville having asked him one day if he could not give him some information about a Jesuit father whom he wished to know thoroughly, the general replied to the ambassador that he would

give him within twenty-four hours all the information he might desire.

The next day, he brought him notes so full of particulars about the French Jesuit whom he wished to know, that he was amazed at the quickness, and the exactness of the details of the general's notice.

"Do not be astonished at this, monsieur l'ambassadeur," replied the Father, "every year our rectors send to the superiors notes on the character, intelligence, knowledge, conduct, and occupations of each one of our Fathers; the superior draws up charts for the Society in France and the French assistant who resides in Rome near me, gives me an account, if needs be, of the life of each member of the Order."

M. de Stainville, who aspired to become prime minister, conceived fears of this harmony and as he had since then many things of which to reproach himself with regard to his relations with this Order, he combined with Mme. de Pompadour to destroy it and to deprive the Dauphin, chief of the opposing party, of the support he

might expect from an Order so powerful in Europe, and in all the Catholic countries.

And yet, in proportion as Mme. de Pompadour's party fortified itself, the opposing side showed its resentment to her.

M. de Richelieu was one of those who showed towards Mme. de Pompadour the greatest independence.

CHAPTER VII

Madame de Pompadour had such an idea of her influence and of the duties of courtiers towards her that besides the refusal of an absolution which I have just mentioned, she received divers other affronts, namely, one from a peer of France.

The higher nobility, as well as the Church, have always been secretly indignant at seeing themselves compelled to show respect to this woman whose sojourn at Court offered all sorts of improprieties, from whatever side it might be considered.

Here is the anecdote relating to M. de Richelieu.

Louis XV finding every day with his favourite, Alexandrine, her daughter [14], took this child into his friendship and gave her so many proofs of it that Alexandrine called Louis XV *her papa*.

The Duc de Fronsac, son of Marshal de Riche-

lieu, was the nobleman of the Court on whom the King cast his eyes to marry her.

He went so far as to mention it to the marshal, who replied to that prince: "Sire, I shall ask the consent of the House of Lorraine."

He was in fact nearly related to it through his second wife, née Princesse de Guise.

These words were understood as being a graceful refusal; yet it does not appear that the King, much too just, bore any ill will against the duc on that account: he continued to share his favour and perhaps was he thought the better of for having had the strength to resist the attraction of a great fortune in rejecting the mésalliance of Mme. d'Etioles, née Jeanne Poisson.

As to Mlle. Alexandrine, she much resembled Mme. de Pompadour; she was very pretty and very lively, taking much pride in her mother's favour; this fault was perhaps less that of a child than of the flatteries which surrounded her: she was sent to the convent of the Assomption de Notre-Dame, where she was educated.

At the same time there was in the convent Mlle. de Rohan-Soubise, daughter of the Prince de

Soubise, to-day married to the Prince de Condé; and a few other young ladies of the highest eminence.

Either through ignorance, or a great opinion of herself, Alexandrine d'Etioles presumed one day to dispute precedence with that princess: she was soon shown wherein she was in the wrong; but Mme. de Pompadour, who heard of it, simply replied: "It was a breach of politeness."

This Alexandrine died in the year 1764 in the same convent.

The smallpox carried her away between thirteen and fourteen years of age, at the time her mother was negotiating for her a marriage with one of the princes of the House of Nassau, wishing to avenge herself of M. de Richelieu.

A heart wholly given up to pride, vanity and avarice is hardly ever open to impressions of nature; it would be doing her too much honour to believe her susceptible of it.

The King was much affected by the loss of Alexandrine, and she pretended to be, but the quarrels and the noise of the Court soon made her forget her grief.

If something were able to affect her, it is that that death took away the means of justifying herself before the world and herself, for her passion to amass wealth; she no longer said that she had a dear child in whose interest she heaped up treasures.

Although deprived of the pretext used by those whom the thirst for gold masters, to colour their conduct and mask what there is of the odious and criminal in it, she was not less greedy nor less ambitious.

The loss of her daughter only served to put in evidence that she was a miser because of avarice, since she refused to her passion nothing which could flatter it, after as before the death of Alexandrine.

The Marquis de Marigny, her brother and heir-apparent to her immense wealth, would rather tend to appease in her the desire to acquire than to lend her a motive, did she not do all that she does to please herself.

The contempt she has for him is caused by the natural incapacity of his bent, by the impossibility to put to good account the advantages she

procures for him, by making proper use of them, and by being a credit to her; and as he responds too badly to her vanity to cause her to love him, people perceive the trouble which the alleged marquis gives her.

She has the continuous grief of seeing him exposed to the mockery of the Court and to the insults of the universe, she has that of being unable to attribute the contempt with which he is covered only to the lack of all merit which is evident; she had the weakness of believing that her fortune made people envious of her, although it was very true that what she took for envy was but a mixture of contempt and grief in those who noticed the origin of her power and how she had made abusive use of it.

She would have earnestly wished to be able to ascribe to that cause the discredit in which her brother was; but seeing the impossibility of doing this with any shadow of reason, she decided to take sides with those who mocked rather than injure her penetration in defending him.

Yet it is generally believed that he will be her

natural heir, or at least that he will inherit the greater share of her goods.

Her brother will have the advantage over all the others because he is her brother, and because that title can still lay claim to overcoming the extreme indifference which she has for all others than herself. So as to diminish the shame of the ill use of her fortune by the hope of seeing born to him children more worthy of it, she has made several attempts to marry him, but until now they have all been useless; she is too particular in the choice of a wife, and this too great delicacy has opposed itself to her plans.

She would soon succeed in finding among the poor and unknown nobility, some woman in whom the idea of grandeur, riches and favour would have conquered the repugnance of a mésalliance; but that would not come up to the aims of Mme. de Pompadour; she wishes that the family in which she shall place her illustrious brother shall not only be of good nobility, but she further means that it be rich and as distinguished by its rank as by its place.

With our existing customs, such families are not to be found so easily as she imagines.

Families distinguished for their refinement are little tempted to expose themselves to the ridicule which such an alliance would bring them.

In the meantime, M. de Marigny condemns himself to celibacy, but it is to be hoped that he will not end his days in it.

The curious of our history could not too much deplore the total extinction of the illustrious house of the Poissons.

From the above facts, one can judge how much the King must have to suffer in secret owing to his favourite and her brother.

The King is sensitive on matters of etiquette and propriety, the bourgeois tone of Mme. de Pompadour may please him at Choisy or in his small apartments; but I very much doubt if he is not disgusted every time he meets there the Poisson (fish) metamorphosed into a marquis.

CHAPTER VIII

The perpetual opposition which Mme. de Pompadour met with at Court, specially from the devout faction, embittered her character more and more, both against the Church of France and against the Jesuits; she contracted a secret and profound aversion towards M. de Fitz-James, Bishop of Soissons.

This prelate having shown great severity against Mme. de Châteauroux, at Metz, when the King had been in danger of death, Mme. de Pompadour saw in each bishop of the kingdom as many Fitz-James and in each one of the King's colds a mortal malady which was to drive her away from the species of throne which she had raised at the Court, next to that of the King.

She no longer saw in the Dauphin, who was in fact the hope and support of the Jesuits, anything but a prince deeply irritated towards her, who

would not fail to cast her into a convent, as soon as she lost Louis XV.

This woman, ceaselessly tormented by her fears, continuously annoyed M. the Bishop of Soissons, who had received from the Pretender the assurance and even the nomination *en titre* to a cardinalship.

The King himself, whom Mme. de Pompadour persistently angered against the events of Metz, refused to recognise this nomination.

Cardinal de Tencin then negotiated with the Pretender a nomination to that hat in favour of M. de Luynes, Archbishop of Sens; and Mme. la Dauphine, who had a great consideration for that prelate, interesting herself in the success of that promotion, M. de Luynes was named cardinal.

He is a gracious and enlightened man, cherished of the Dauphin and of his wife, and one of the prelates of the Church of France who honour their place by great virtues.

He is well decided that he will not grant power to any confessor to hear the sins of Mme. de Pompadour, who always goes to Fontainebleau,

a city situated in his diocese, if she wishes to do her devotions there.

One sees now, according to the facts I have reported, that, whichever way Mme. de Pompadour turns, she only finds ingrates and false friends: vainly does she dispose of the public treasury as she pleases, and of the nominations to dignities and places; people receive her bounties, favours are asked of her for profit, and to obtain others, while she is despised, and people are vexed at a state of affairs which compels one either to step aside or to pay court to have her in one's favour.

She is well aware of this; that is why she daily adds a new degree to the sharpness of her character.

The independence of the clergy, of Monseigneur le Dauphin and of his party vex her, and many think that she seeks all the enemies which Monseigneur le Dauphin and the clergy may have, to strengthen herself by their support.

But, the party of free-thinkers is only daring, and without power at Court, the King being

born a very religious prince, and worthy descendant in that respect, of Saint-Louis.

In the capital, there are many men of letters who are called free-thinkers, not because they are minds superior for their genius, but for their daring against the religion of the State; people place at their head M. de Voltaire, who is, without contradiction, a very great poet.

He had been a frequent caller on Mme. de Pompadour when she was still Mme. Le Normant d'Etioles, and he had had several disagreeable affairs at Court, on account of his opinions, which caused the government some anxiety.

Mme. de Pompadour, delighted at having at her disposal a man possessed of so much wit and influence, has resolved to place him at the head of a party organised to attack religion, to render it ridiculous, to raise against it all that history may have to offer in the matter of errors or of crimes in ministers of the altars of past centuries, to discredit and harass those of the present. The Church of France, for its part, despises Mme. de Pompadour, and suffers from her ephemeral credit; the clergy unites itself closely with Monseigneur

le Dauphin and bewails the weaknesses of the King.

Mme. de Pompadour, who fears to lose that prince, has resolved to keep the clergy busy with quarrels, and to give it such anxieties that the Church might have enough with its own affairs without meddling with the King's pleasures.

She has resolved to live and to die mistress of Louis XV; she has resolved to make use of artifice and strength, of duplicity and truth, to sustain her: woe to parties and to individuals who dare to oppose the pleasures of the King and of Mme. de Pompadour!

It is assured that no one knows the nature of the consequences of independence from all religion in which affect to live the infidel men and writers, protected by Mme. de Pompadour.

M. de Choiseul later has joined the party.

Yet, he fears the anger of Louis XV, always religious and devout in the midst of his pleasures, to the extent that he prizes as much his descent from Saint-Louis, because he knows him to be in Heaven, as he does that from his father, which gave him the most important crown in the world.

CHAPTER IX

In proportion as Mme. de Pompadour appeared to acquire power over the King's mind, the Queen's court surrounded itself with dark and heavy clouds.

Sulking was indulged in with much bitterness and resentment, but in secret.

The first Dauphine had brought from Madrid a character proud and serious, as well as politeness and Castilian formalities; her ambitious mother had educated her to be the instrument of her will, when she should be Queen of France, and history will no doubt some day tell all that that woman did to give crowns to the children of Philip V, born of the second marriage with her.

The young Dauphine, in the short time that she lived, soon forgot the instructions of her mother which tended to take possession of the Dauphin's mind, and to dominate it; she became,

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not the ruler, but the friend of the Dauphin, who cherished her dearly.

The King, on the death of his daughter-in-law, called for her casket, which Monseigneur le Dauphin had dared neither to examine, refuse, nor conceal from his father's eyes; there were found in it the instructions of the Queen of Spain, besides a code in which mother and daughter were to correspond.

In her correspondence with her, it was found that the young Dauphine had totally forgotten the interests of her mother and of her brothers to attach herself solely to her husband.

The King, who is good, was touched by this devotion, and he showed to several noblemen fragments of these letters, saying: "See what a good Frenchwoman she was! Ah! how I pity my son!"

And yet the virtuous and good household of the Dauphin and his wife was a bitter and living criticism of the King's life, separated from his wife.

The Queen is no longer young nor beautiful;

she has however some charms left and much personal merit.

The second Dauphine, Saxon by birth, brought to France a character deep, ambitious, and capable of very extended views; she had received a more varied and careful education than the princesses; she was learned, without having the awkwardness which learning gives to women.

She lived very retired with her husband, showing herself but little at the Court wherein the favourite wished to dominate as a sovereign.

The King's daughters showed a particular attachment to their mother and to their brother; they were, as the former, in a state of opposition with Mme. de Pompadour's party: they seemed to be annoyed by the deference which the affection which they bore towards their father compelled them to have for Mme. de Pompadour, as well as by the credit which she enjoyed and by the nullity in which lived the Dauphin of France.

There is no expression against the favourite that this party did not use in its secret meetings when it considered that it could dispose of no office

without obtaining it through Mme. de Pompadour.

The favourite maintained the King in the repugnance which nature had given him, to cede a portion of his authority to his son; and seeing in the reign of that prince, the end of her credit and perhaps of her liberty, the Dauphin of France was for her a personage whose tastes, dispositions, principles and attachments she ceaselessly studied, so as to oppose him in secret.

It is this woman, clever and wicked, who has but too well succeeded in giving this prince the reputation he has of being narrow-minded and of having an excessive leaning toward religion, two things but little compatible, in their detail, with his august birth.

There were distinguished, outside the royal family, in the Queen's and Dauphin's party, the Duc de Luynes, his wife, M. de Nicolay, Bishop of Verdun, Cardinal de Luynes, and specially Mme. de Marsan, a professional bigot, whom the condition of things did not permit to be forgotten when it became necessary to attend to the education of the children of the Dauphin.

At the death of Mme. le Duchesse de Tallard, governess of the prince's children, who has acted a part at Court, Mme. la Comtesse de Marsan was in fact chosen to succeed her.

Mme. de Tallard was fond of gambling and of sitting up late, had wit, dignity and nobility of expression; she named as her executor Chauvelin, former keeper of the seals, and distributed before her death her jewels and her snuff-boxes: she took on that day the handsomest of her diamonds, placed it on her finger and as her chamber maid wished to take it from her to put it in a safe place: "I am to die soon," said she to her, "and I have bequeathed in my will to M. Chauvelin the diamond that I shall wear when I die."

Mme. de Tallard had made in her place 115,000 livres in King's *rentes,* because at each new child, the salary was increased 35,000 livres.

This increase was stable, even after the education: she was separated from her husband by mutual consent, spent a great amount, and owed enormously.

Malice, perhaps calumny, pursued her even after death.

As to the Comtesse de Marsan, she never ceased to show to the Jesuits, to the Sulpiciens, to the devout, and to the party of Monseigneur le Dauphin, the tender and devoted zeal for which she is well known.

If devotion had not put into her head too much narrowness, and banished many designs and considerations to make of the children of France princes worthy of their illustrious birth, there is no doubt but that her zeal and attachment would have made real men of the grandchildren of Louis XV.

CHAPTER X

We are very near, I fear, to the deepest conspiracies.

The King of France, the gentlest of princes, the most lovable in his person, is attacked by a monster: all in France are alarmed.

We owe to our King that which every good Frenchman owes him in such a circumstance.

But we also owe to his successors the lessons of history. What circumstances accompany this assassination abroad?

What other circumstances accompany it within?

What documents, in the trial of the monster who armed himself with a poniard, deserve reflections?

And what parts of that case deserve to be cast aside as illusory or worthless for history?

Condition of France abroad.

England, seeing our negotiations begun with

Marie-Thérèse for an alliance, was fearful of this continental coalition.

The King of Prussia saw in it the evident project of his destruction.

The Protestant countries figured on the increase of power of the Catholic courts.

England saw in it a conspiracy against her commerce, against its constitution, against the power of the House of Hanover, established on the throne of the Stuarts.

Condition of France within.

Within, the Court of France and the Parliaments had had dangerous discussions on the royal authority and on that of the tribunals: the Higher Chamber only obeyed the King; the other chambers were dissolved and minds were in the greatest state of excitement.

The party of the Jesuits and that of the Jansenists had abandoned themselves to scandalous quarrels.

At the Court, there was seen a dissension of the same character: the devout party of the Dauphin and the party of the favourite were almost at open war.

It is in this conjuncture that Louis XV is struck by a poniard.

What a lesson for governments! Let them learn that, in strifes of this nature, it is at them that the outside enemy, who prepares them for us, principally aims.

The more one studies the papers of the trial of the parricide Damiens, of which the government has permitted the publication, the more one finds that the Court of France has tied the hands of the judges, and has only allowed them to investigate the necessary formalities to punish this attack and to hide its sources.

I asked one of the judges of the King's assassin, a peer of France, to give me the notes he has collected; he confirmed the opinion expressed in the preceding observations: the reader will be able to judge of this, for I shall report word for word the notes I have from him.

But it is not in the papers which have served in this trial that one finds what history seeks in these circumstances: it is precisely in the pieces that have been neglected that one must seek the truth that interests.

The interests of history and of truth are frequently in opposition with the interests of governments.

I shall therefore report a paper which they are very careful not to use in Parliament, for it does not judge matters concerning kings; it determines at our expense our respective quarrels; kings judge them with armies.

The paper of which I speak therefore relates to the secret practices attributed to England in this cruel circumstance, or rather of the party furious against us which has taken the upper hand in that island.

Two weeks after the attack on Louis XV, there appeared before the minister of Foreign Affairs the naval captains Imbert and Dupérier, who declared that they had information to give on the causes of the attempt on the life of Louis XV.

These officers, made prisoners of war by the English and taken to London from where they escaped, returning to France with a man attached to the director of the main post-office of London, declared having heard from the Englishman that

the party opposed to France had resolved to ruin that kingdom, instead of waiting to see England ruined by France united to Austria.

They said that the English emissaries and the men who were secretly devoted to England for money, kept up the dissensions which existed between the Jansenists and the Molinists in the clergy, between the body of the clergy and the Parliaments, between the party of the King's favourite and the Dauphin's party; and that when minds would be well excited, well inflamed and well distracted, when specially dissension should be well established in the royal family, then the King would be killed, while the Dauphin of France, inclined towards peace, and enemy of war and of the actual alliance, once become King, would let England and Prussia breathe.

According to this Englishman, the coalition was such against Prussia, that excepting for a miracle or for an unexpected success, this power was about to be annihilated, without there being in it any other profit for France than that of seeking to please Marie-Thérèse, while England, in

spite of the taking of Minorca, would make France repent the present war.

These are the most reasonable things known about the resentment of the enemies abroad regarding the change of principles of our diplomacy.

But one can well see that the Parliament of Paris can not settle a procedure of this nature; and the statement of an Englishman would not suffice to determine our judgment, if other proofs and considerations did not at the same time persuade us that the outside enemy knows different routes for reaching his goal, a change of reign and the overthrow of the credit of Mme. de Pompadour and of her new policy.

Let us see what was taking place in the Higher Chamber, to which the King, by letters patent, confided the trial of the monster Damiens.

CHAPTER XI

The notes which I place by the side of my narrative were given to me by a scrupulous preserver of the anecdotes of the Court; he was a judge in this case; he is naturally timid, his mind is exact; his narration, I think, will be believed.

Yesterday, January 4, 1757, the King, after dinner, returned from Trianon to see Madame Victoire, who was not very well.

He had given orders at half-past five to return to Trianon, his coaches awaited him at the door of the new salle des gardes.

The King came down at six o'clock, preceded by M. de Montmirel, having on his right and on his left M. de Brionne and M. le Premier, in front M. de Baudreville, an equerry.

Monseigneur le Dauphin was at his side, on the left, and M. le Duc d'Ayen behind him.

There are several steps from the salle des gardes to the courtyard, he was at the bottom of

the last step, when feeling himself struck on the right side, he said: "Someone has struck me a sharp blow with his elbow."

At the same time there was seen a man of about forty-five years, dressed in brown, with a brown coat, who had his hat on his head.

"Do you not see the King?" asked Monseigneur le Dauphin.

A garde du corps threw down his hat. M. Didreville, King's equerry attached to Monseigneur le Dauphin, seized the wretch by the shoulders.

The King having put his hand to the place where he had been struck, which was between the fourth and fifth rib, withdrew it covered with blood.

"I am wounded," said he, "and this is the man who struck me"; seeing him under arrest, he said: "Hold him and see that he be not killed."

There was a lapse of about six seconds from the moment the blow had been struck to that when the King's equerry seized the wretch.

He might have taken advantage of that time to escape in the midst of the men and horses; but either through astonishment at the horror of his

crime, or indifference to his own life, he did not flee.

As soon as it became known that the King was wounded, the scoundrel was handed over to the gardes du corps, then to the provostship, who kept him inside with forty men of the regiment of the guards.

In the meantime the King was losing much blood; he ascended the stairs again without assistance.

He was to sleep at Trianon, so that there was at Versailles no linen for him, nor sheets for his bed, nor valet de chambre to wait on him, nor even to bind his wound. M. de la Martinière, his head surgeon, who had come to Versailles, had returned to Trianon.

The King was laid on a mattress, without sheets; all those who were about him undressed him.

M. Hévin, surgeon to Mme. le Dauphine, was called to bind the King's wound, who at that moment had a choking fit, and M. Hévin bled him.

M. de la Martinière having arrived, probed the wound; his probe entered as far as the rib; he

demonstrated to the King that the opening was not downward, but slightly upward, and although four inches long it had not done much injury; a matter which was again verified so as to leave no doubt.

Here are the fortunate circumstances of this grievous event; the King wore winter clothes, consequently thicker; then it was discovered that his shirt by chance had a quadruple fold at the place he was struck.

The King was bled, that same evening, a second time; the night was not very good, the less so as the King usually lies on his right side, which is that of the wound, and he was obliged to turn on the other side; however, he slept.

The weapon used by the wretched assassin was a knife having on one end an ordinary blade, and on the other a sort of stilleto shorter and narrower than the blade of the knife.

Fortunately, he gave the preference to the stilleto end, a fact which made the wound much less deep and not dangerous.

In these sad circumstances, the King showed much firmness, calmness and religion.

The Queen, who thought that he had left for Trianon, was not informed of the matter at first, excepting that she was told that he had fainted; she hastened to him and it was the King himself who told her: "Madame, I am wounded."

The Queen, knowing nothing, knew not what to reply to these words.

The King repeated them and one can imagine the shock and the grief of that virtuous princess.

Monseigneur le Dauphin confirmed the cruel news to the Queen, and the King asked for a priest.

Abbé de Raigecourt, one of his chaplains, being about, he had him called in and asked for the holy oils.

Abbé de Raigecourt brought them to the council chamber; but the King not being in a condition to confess, the abbé made him an exhortation appropriate to his situation.

Father Desmarets, confessor to the King, was at Paris; Madame proposed that in the meantime Abbé de Soldini, almoner of the *Grand Commun*, a virtuous and much esteemed man, be sent for.

This abbé having arrived, remained three-quarters of an hour with the King under the curtain of his bed; he spent part of the night there, during which the King recalled him several times.

Father Desmarets having arrived that night, the King was with him a long time.

The assassin was kept for a few hours in the guard room; since he was transferred to the prison, he has been questioned several times by the provost-marshal.

He seems firm and determined, *not fearing death.*

What is known or what the authorities wish should be known of his replies as yet only show a spirit of fanaticism. Masters of Requests have been selected to question him juridically.

The King however has said that he forgave him with all his heart; that he did not wish to meddle with the case, that he gave all his powers to Monseigneur le Dauphin; that he hold the council deemed necessary, that he would give his opinion there, and that he consequently declared him *his lieutenant* (these terms, these expressions, and that

confidence in a prince so jealous of his authority announce how far he was from believing the horrors reported in this circumstance).

Monseigneur le Dauphin, in truth, has long since sat at the council of dispatches, but he does not give his opinion there; several meetings have taken place on the present case, in which he opined with much wisdom on all the questions relating to it; but when other matters were taken up, he replied that he could give no decision, as he had power only in what concerned the attempted assassination.

At the council meetings, it is always the King who decides or who is supposed to decide, although he leaves it to the majority, as the late King always did.

Monseigneur le Dauphin, as lieutenant of the King, has the same power to decide on that which relates to the present case; it is that power that he has declined to stretch.

He takes the opinions, as in his capacity of head of the council; he opines and does not wish that questions passed should become a decision until the King has so ordered, while he actually

decides in the wretched affair which interests us all.

This morning he approached the King's bed and asked him affectionately if he suffered; the King replied to him: "I should suffer much more, my son, had such an accident happened to you."

A new evidence of the true sentiments of the King on the filial virtues of Monseigneur le Dauphin.

The city of Paris sends here three or four times a day for news of the King and M. le Duc de Gesvres sends some four times a day to the Mayor.

The day the King was attacked, as soon as the news became known in the city, and M. de Gesvres was leaving for Versailles, there gathered in his courtyard and at the door a great multitude of people to hear about the King, and they remained there until five o'clock in the morning in spite of the sharpness of the cold, to await the arrival of the second messenger.

M. de Gesvres caused fires to be lit for them in his courtyard and in the street.

The theatres were ending their performances

when the news came; but since Twelfth-day, there have been no more performances.

M. le Duc de Gesvres and M. le prévôt des marchands (the mayor) both affirm that consternation in Paris was very great and that it lasted a long time.

Monseigneur, the archbishop, at once orders forty hour prayers; there are novenas at Sainte-Geneviève, where there is a tremendous affluence of people; it is not without difficulty that the town-council which goes there every day can enter.

The churches are full, the affection and the anxiety of the people is as great as in 1744 during the King's illness.

A non-equivocal proof of these sentiments, is that, in spite of the usage of the suppers on the eve of Twelfth-day, and of eating cakes, drinking and shouting: "The King drinks!" not in a single tavern of Paris, was this joyous cry heard; I have this information from M. le prévôt des marchands.

There were none even in the private houses, and the cook-shop keepers who sell a turkey at this time to every bourgeois were much astonished to see their year's supply left on their hands.

The city clerk having come here to testify to the King the joy of the city over his improved health, M. le Duc de Gesvres took him to His Majesty's apartments.

The chief-clerk of the Parliament of Rouen had just reached there. He came to assure His Majesty of the fears, the respect and of the attachment of that body.

M. de Richelieu had already announced two or three times to the King the deputy from Rouen; finally M. de Gesvres having mentioned the matter to His Majesty, as he spoke of the one from Paris, the King permitted both to enter.

They were admitted within the baluster; the clerk from Rouen delivered a rather long address; the King did not interrupt him, but sat up in bed, and when the speech was finished he said to the deputy:

"I am quite well; tell my Parliament to think of giving me evidence of its obedience."

Immediately after, the deputy from the city of Paris appeared; the King replied to him in the presence of the Rouen deputy:

"Tell my good city of Paris that I am much

pleased at its zeal and affection and assure it of my protection and friendship."

Everyone knows that at that time the Parliaments were in a sort of state of disobedience.

The news of the King's injury has created a total change in the public mind.

The Etats of Brittany have written to M. de Saint-Florentin that there would be no more trouble from them; that they wished to obey all that the King might wish of them, and to do nothing but give evidence of their fidelity, their attachment and their respect, by sacrificing their goods and even their lives in his service.

They are sending four deputies who are to arrive to-morrow; this happy change does credit to the sentiments of the Breton nobility of whom the greater part of the Etats is composed.

At the same time it can not be denied that M. le Duc d'Aiguillon and Monseigneur the Bishop of Rennes, who are acting in concert, have cleverly profited by the circumstances and by the impression they have made.

Everybody agrees that M. d'Aiguillon, since he has been in Brittany, has acted with the greatest

care and with all the intelligence and ability possible, as well in matters relating to the military as in those concerning the interior of the province; his facility for work, the time he devotes to it, his politeness, have earned him the esteem and friendship of all Brittany. (I am writing on Sunday, January 9, 1757.)

Monseigneur le Dauphin has to-day given an evidence of goodness, the news of which will be agreeable to the Bretons.

There is a prodigious attendance at his dinner, since he began to dine in public.

In the midst of the crowd he perceived M. le Marquis de Poulpri, a man of quality from Brittany, whom he knows but slightly, and to whom he had perhaps never spoken; he asked him if he had received news from Brittany.

M. de Poulpri having replied that Monseigneur must be informed of it: "It is for that purpose that I have called you," replied Monseigneur de Dauphin, "to tell you of the very great pleasure with which I have heard of the conduct of the Etats. I trust that I shall never forget it, and I beg you to so inform them."

The premier president and all the chief justices came again to-day to inquire about the King.

Two or three of the councilors of the Higher Chamber, some of those who have resigned, have asked to be admitted, by special warrant, among the judges of the attempted assassination.

It does not seem that this sort of proposition will be accepted; the King is still angry at their disobedience.

There are now twenty-five judges at the Higher Chamber, namely: ten presidents, twelve councilors and three honorary: among these judges there are four clergymen who can not sit at criminal cases, even those of the King, because of the canons of the Church which forbid them to judge criminals; that leaves twenty-one, which is a more than sufficient number.

It is but too true that the wretched assassin, while he was still in the small guard room, downstairs, said: "Let care be taken of Monseigneur le Dauphin."

These words were heard by everybody.

M. d'Armentières, who was passing in that room at the moment, told me that he had heard them;

it is claimed that he added: " If you are interested in him; " but I am not so sure of the last words.

It was in this room that his feet were put near the fire in the hope of making him speak, and as he moved his legs, the fire tongs were used to hold them still, and as these were hot they burned him in such a manner that he would be crippled should he live.

This brought on a fever and it was feared that he might die at any moment.

All those who were present at the awful attempt were called to testify.

The faculty of medicine and of surgery were also called, as having examined the wound, and all the depositions were written down as if they were essential; they found the prisoner in a condition which assures an early death.

He is on a bed, with irons on his hands only, because none can be put on the feet owing to the wounds.

The sheets in which he lies have been sewn; in spite of that he threw himself out of the bed to-day and injured himself.

He is carefully watched, and in the room there

are provost guards. The outside of the prison is guarded by thirty soldiers of the guard and twenty Swiss.

M. le Duc de Biron answers, on his life, that he will not be carried away. He went to see him yesterday and the commanding officer went into the room with him to make sure that nothing had happened to the prisoner.

This scoundrel is from Artois; he at first gave his name as Damiens; [15] he first went to the Jesuit college, performing the duties of those valets who are called college-fags, and he recognised several of those who were students in that college; after that he had fourteen or fifteen masters, etc.; at times he called himself Febore and again Flamand.

He bore the latter name when he was in the service of Mme. de Sainte-Reuse. Mme. de Sainte-Reuse was pleased with the intelligence of that servant who worked very well and who wrote a good hand.

However, M. de Marigny, who often visited at that house, impressed by his wicked countenance, advised Mme. de Sainte-Reuse to discharge him and she followed his advice.

Some time after this, having gone to the Opera, this wretch came to ask her for alms, at the door of her coach, in a very arrogant manner: she closed the coach-window, but the scoundrel broke it with stones; and since then, when M. de Marigny went to visit Mme. de Sainte-Reuse, he threw stones at the windows, so that M. Berryer had to be informed and he sent a guard.

Some time passed and nothing was heard of him.

During the last voyage from Fontainebleau, M. de Marigny received a letter from him in which he stated that he was dying of hunger and that in despair he had attempted to drown himself, but had been taken out of the water.

Yet there were found on his person twenty-four or twenty-five gold *louis* and five or six in silver.

He was asked where he had obtained that money; he replied that he had sold some property which he owned in his country and that he had received seven or eight hundred *livres* for it.

Besides what he said regarding Monseigneur le Dauphin, it has been noticed that, in his replies, he almost always made use of the word *we,* and in the first moment, when he was asked whether he

had accomplices, he said: "If I have any they are not here."

I have spoken of the knife which he used: it is a very ill-made weapon, whose real blade is neither pointed nor sharp, and which would be hard to use for ordinary purposes.

I speak according to the words of one who saw it and examined it.

It was doubted, at the beginning, if the kind of penknife which is at the other end of the handle, and four inches long, was the real weapon of which he made use in the commission of his crime; and some were so certain that he had another, that a careful search was made of the courtyard.

This closed and bloodless penknife in his pocket gave good reason to doubt; yet nothing was found, and the comparison of this instrument with the opening in the clothes proves that he made use of no other weapon.

The Paris theatres re-opened yesterday, January 10, and the King began to play to-day.

The deputies of the Etats of Brittany having arrived this morning, the King, the curtains at the foot of his bed being opened, received them, in-

VOLTAIRE

troduced by M. le Duc de Penthièvre and M. de Saint-Florentin.

M. the Bishop of Quimper (Annibal de Guillé) addressed him; the speech was very touching; the deputies then spoke outside of the baluster.

" I did not need this evidence to be assured of the affection of my subjects from my province of Brittany," said the King; " their sentiments have reached my heart; you may tell them so."

The deputies from Brittany went yesterday, the 10th, to visit the Queen; she told them that she had heard with pleasure of the conduct of the Etats of Brittany and that she was deeply touched by it.

The King, wishing to give a token of kindness to the Bretons, yesterday received in his dressing gown, M. de Morand, chevalier of Saint-Louis.

This M. de Morand was a deputy of the nobility; he is a colonel of the regiment of the Queen's dragoons.

It is to-morrow, the 15th, that letters patent for the transfer of the criminal proceedings against the wretched assassin will be served on the Higher Chamber.

They might have been sent before, but it was desired that the case be taken up at once and not interrupt the investigation of this terrible crime which is being continued.

A crime committed at Court is within the province of provostship.

The provost-marshal must judge the criminal; the provostship is a tribunal that has a great number of officers, and the letters patent are only needed because it is taking away the criminal from the natural jurisdiction to transfer him to the Higher Chamber.

The rule, then, is that the prisoner be conducted to the Conciergerie; but this one, guilty of lèse-majesté, will be conducted to the Montgommeri tower, wherein once was the wretched Ravaillac.

He always will be under the eyes of sergeants of the guards, who will eat in the same place as the prisoner.

Orders have been received that he should be given to eat only the same sort of food that they themselves are to have; to make sure that he be not poisoned.

There is even a question of another measure for

the food of the sergeants and of the soldiers of the guards appointed to watch this wretch.

The inquiry of such a case in the Higher Chamber is always done by four persons, who are the premier president, another chief justice, the reporter, and another councilor called *Evangeliste*, who, with the greatest exactness, must examine the papers of the proceeding; the clergymen councilors may sit at the inquiry of a criminal case, but when the opinions demand death, they withdraw.

The meeting being in the Higher Chamber, not only the presidents and honorary councilors may be present, but even four masters of requests; five can not be present, and when a fifth one comes, the youngest withdraws.

Besides the inquiries already made here by the provostship, there has been further information which M. le Prince de Croy has sent from Arras.

As his zeal for all which concerns the person and the service of the King is boundless, he went to Arras and made careful inquiry of everything which related to the assassin, and has sent here a report full of details and very clearly expressed.

This scoundrel has been educated at a college in Béthune; he has held thirty or forty different places; discharged from all, among other masters, he was in the service of a wealthy tradesman, at present in Petersburg, named M. Michel, from whom he stole two hundred *louis*.

He was arrested: one hundred and sixty *louis* were recovered, and his master, seeing that he could not hope to find the difference, did not want him hanged and discharged him.

The wretch enlisted three times and deserted as often.

He has a wife and daughter, who have been taken to Paris.

At a meeting of the 12th, at the beginning of which M. de Duras was received duke and peer of France, there were only about sixty judges, among whom twenty princes of the blood, that is to say all, excepting M. le Comte de Charolais, who fears to stay any length of time indoors, being subject to attacks of dizziness.

I do not mention the legitimated; it is known that, although they have the honours of the princes of the blood, they have not in Parliament the dis-

tinction of superseding the bar; for that reason, they are not to be found there.

There were on the same day, twenty peers of France, but there were only nineteen of them left; M. le Maréchal de Richelieu having been obliged to testify as a witness of the attack, withdrew after the reception: it is a homage rendered to law which does not permit to be both witness and judge.

There were twelve chief justices, including two honorary, three masters of requests, and the others were, honorable councilors, presidents and honorary councilors of inquests and requests, or councilors of the Higher Chamber.

Immediately after the reception, without leaving the place, the meeting continued in the lower seats.

The councilors and the honorary are then in the upper seats, only in the left section on entering, which makes it to the right of the King's seat.

The seats to the left can not be filled, because there is a sort of cover above the chief justice's chair, which would totally hide those who would be to the left of the King's seat.

They began by speaking of the criminal case;

the reporter of the case is M. Sévère, the second reporter is M. Pasquier, and that position is termed *l'Evangéliste.*

The matter of examining the father, brother and sister-in-law, sister and brother-in-law, wife and daughter of the scoundrel Damiens, was taken up.

All these relatives had been arrested and taken to the Bastille; but it was necessary to issue decrees to be able to question them juridically.

Hardly had M. Sévère begun to speak, when M. le Prince de Conti proposed that before anything else there should be a reading of the proceedings made at Versailles by the provostship of the château; this proceeding is extremely long and well done.

M. le Prince de Conti insisted on this reading and it was given by M. Pasquier with the assistance of M. Titon.

The following were read: the evidence of all the witnesses, the letter for the King, dictated by the wretch to M. Blot, provost officer, the list of seven names dictated since by the same wretch to the said Blot, both papers being signed by the said

Damiens; and the different examinations without omitting one.

This reading lasted almost four hours, including the proceedings made in Paris, since Damiens has been taken to the Montgommeri tower.

In this part, is an examination which received the praise it deserved, being done with much art and method.

These various papers being read, M. Sévère made the report of the reasons existing for issuing a writ against the relatives of Damiens.

These reasons having been examined in detail, seven writs were issued.

Then came the question of a formal charge to be brought against a lawyer, for speeches awful to repeat, delivered by him at a meal, with ten or twelve persons; speeches which however seemed to come from a furious but little educated man.

This matter was much debated: the votes had to be counted; the majority voted against a writ of arrest and for the continuation of the inquiry.

Yet this decree appeared the more just as too frequent examples can not be made against speeches

that are unfortunately repeated to excess, and which according to that of the lawyer assuredly deserved serious punishment.

Immediately after the report of M. le Prince de Croy was mentioned. It contained all the particulars which he secured at Arras, where he went expressly, and in all Artois, on the conduct of the wretch, while he lived in that province, just before he came to Versailles: it was then after four o'clock in the afternoon, and deliberation was postponed to the next meeting, which was set for Saturday the 19th.

The attendance of the peers at these sittings is secured without summons, invitation or notice.

They had been invited by M. le Duc de Duras, that day Saturday the 12th, and inquiry was made, on the same Saturday, at the end of the meeting, of M. le Duc d'Orléans, the hour at which he would be at the Palais on the following Saturday the 19th.

The hour assigned was eight o'clock in the morning and all the peers unanimously agreed to be there at the appointed time.

M. le Prince de Conti made new entreaties to

fathom the causes of the attack and that the accomplices of Damiens be sought.

This prince wanted specially an inquiry to be made in Flanders so as to stop the evil at its source; he remarked that France should not be left in uncertainty on the cause of an attempt of this nature.

He impressed on the meeting the deficiency of the proceedings, on what the culprit had done in Flanders, and the necessity of making researches there; adding that the wretch could not have conceived his infamous project from the 31st of December to the 5th of January; that it was established that he had said in Flanders that if he came to Paris and perished there, the foremost person in the world would perish also; and that it was not in five days that accomplices had taken confidence in that man, in a matter of such consequence.

Lastly the Prince de Conti said: "Remember that it would be a very poignant remorse for judges if the criminal, at his death or under the torture, should reproach their inactivity, by naming accomplices in a country where reason alone should cause them to be sought; I should succumb to the

bitter grief caused me by another attack which might arise from a motive which I might have left unknown and existing."

Forty-five votes against twenty-one were of the opinion not to make an investigation in Flanders, and that the affair must be ended.

It was added that the health of the wretch was declining and that it was much to be feared that he might die before the end of the inquiry.

The Prince de Conti, after the decision, remarked that his attachment for the King's person and for the tranquillity of the State was the cause of his proposition; he said that he saw with bitterness that it had not been adopted, that he persisted, in spite of the majority, in believing that his opinion was the good one, and that it was regrettable for the State and for the King that it should not have been followed.

In the second meeting which took place day before yesterday, 19th February, it was first proposed to read the inquiry made on that singular speech of little d'Escoufflet, *pensionnaire* at Saint-Joseph's.

M. le Prince de Conti again interrupted that proposition, to ask that first of all should be read the report of M. de Croy of which I have spoken above.

It was urged, at that moment and later in the course of the sitting, that this report was not only extremely long, but that it did not form a part of the proceeding, being unaccompanied by any legal form; that it was only the result of the zeal and attachment of the Prince de Croy for the King's person, but that regularly it could not serve in evidence in justice; that it was composed of four parts which had been sent successively by M. de Croy, in proportion as he made discoveries, but that these four parts were not immediately dependent one on the other, that they had to be arranged to be put to use, that this arrangement had been made by an accurate extract made by M. Pasquier, that the reading of this extract would suffice, inasmuch as the facts contained in the report could hardly shed interesting light on the causes of this attack, since the wretch who had committed it had been during all that time busy

in hiding to avoid the prosecution of justice, on the occasion of his theft from M. Michel, one of his masters, a prominent tradesman.

This M. Michel has lately arrived from Petersburg. He must be a strong and vigorous man; he made this trip in the space of eighteen days, by means of sleighs and postchaises, all alone and without servants.

M. Pasquier added to these reasons that he had made his extract from the original of the report of M. de Croy, but that he no longer had that original, that he only had a copy of it which was not even certified true.

But le Prince de Conti still persisting on its being read, it was necessary to deliberate.

It would have taken a little more than three hours for that reading, had it been decided on at first.

More than two hours were taken up to decide whether it should be done or not.

Several of the speakers were very long in their speeches; some expressed opinions on the time to read the document, on the necessity or uselessness of that reading, on the preference of the extract

to the paper itself, on the necessity of rendering it, as a matter of form, a part of the papers in the case before reading it.

The opinions had to be counted several times; finally it was resolved to postpone the deliberation on that article until after the reading of the papers essential to the case.

They finally reached the report and the interrogations on the Saint-Joseph affair, a very singular affair and which seemed to demand a writ of arrest against the *pensionnaire* d'Escoufflet, who is no longer at Saint-Joseph's and has been placed in a convent at Saint-Germain, the Paris convents having refused to receive her.

However, there was issued only a summons to appear and be heard; then they spoke of remarks heard, *eleven years* before, by a man actually in Paris, and aged eighty-five. The expressions contained in the remarks are frightful, but have no immediate part in the present affair.

It was added that the investigation of this affair might interest politics, but contained nothing to clear the present case.

M. Sévère and M. Pasquier then rendered an

account of the result of the examination of the persons summoned at the preceding meeting.

There was proposed also the affair of the lawyer of which I have spoken, on which the attorney general had given his final decision, and which through this form was joined to the case; the licence of the speech seemed to demand a warrant of arrest; yet they only decided a continuation of the inquiry.

There were also read two examinations of the assassin: one of a few days before, and already mentioned, an examination which appears of but little interest, the criminal always saying *that he did not wish to reply,* but which it was necessary to see again.

The second examination had taken place the day before, 18th of this month; this examination was based on the report of M. de Croy; it contains various replies: it had lasted seven hours.

Finally it was again proposed to read the report of M. de Croy: it was three o'clock in the afternoon, the sitting had continued since eight o'clock.

The cold compelled an adjournment.

It was agreed to postpone the meeting to the following Friday, so as to have another on Saturday, if necessary.

The sitting of to-day, at the Parliament, began at a quarter after eight.

Throughout the entire meeting the question of the criminal proceeding was continued.

It had been decreed in the last meeting to continue the inquiries on the Saint-Joseph affair.

A report was rendered on the matter to-day.

The more it is looked into, the more singular it appears, and one can hardly doubt but that the little d'Escoufflet girl spoke, on Tuesday, the 5th, the day of the attempt, before four o'clock in the afternoon.

These words: *The King is assassinated or will be* which are considered a lie, a thoughtlessness, the remark of a child, as well in her personal examination as in several others, are well worthy of attention: and so as to be better informed as to the truth, if it is possible to be, and go back to that which gave occasion to the words, the little girl has been ordered arrested.

The affair being to-day in order by the speech

for the crown of M. le procureur général, it was then voted with regard to the two sisters of little d'Escoufflet and a *pensionnaire* at Saint-Joseph's named Geoffroy and who was a very intimate friend of that little girl.

There were different opinions: the one which prevailed was that of M. Pelletier de Rosambo, to postpone all proceedings against the different persons until it should be seen, by the examination of little d'Escoufflet, if there were cause to decide otherwise.

After this affair account was rendered of several speeches of the attorney general on the occasion of different reports made to him by letters or various notices tending to prove speeches which gave reason to suspect the formation of some plot.

These discussions were very long; some appeared to deserve attention, others to be of no consequence.

One of the last affairs, on which much speaking was done informally, was the statement made by Abbé la Chapelle, a man eighty-five years of age, known by M. Zalusky, grand referendary of Poland, a statement that has no immediate connec-

tion with the attack, but which may still give rise to suspicions.

The difficulty was to put in order the information which might be secured on this affair.

M. le Prince de Conti said that he knew the grand referendary very well, because his grandfather or his granduncle had been much attached to the interests of M. le Prince de Conti, grandfather of the present one, at the time of his appointment; that it would be a genuine grief for M. Zalusky if he received a summons to testify to the knowledge he possesses.

Other expedients were therefore sought and M. le Prince de Conti even offered that the denomination be entitled with his name.

There is little probability that the researches produce useful information; but nevertheless they will not be neglected, it being intended that nothing be forgotten in so important an affair.

It is because of this principle, which is uniform in all the assembly, that other suggestions have been made that are not clothed in legal form, but which may deserve to be examined.

One of MM. les Conseillers also said that two

persons unknown to him, but who appear to him to be honest, had notified him that they knew in Normandy two other persons who had some knowledge on the causes of the attack, and added that the names of the two Normandy persons had been supplied him.

The uncertainty of this notice consequently prevented action; but it was agreed that all those who should hear of anything concerning the said attempt should communicate to M. le procureur général all the papers, letters and notices received by them, so that he might make use of them according to his prudence and knowledge, setting aside all that he considered worthless, inasmuch as the prolongation of the inquiry only serves to delay the final judgment, endanger the life of the miserable assassin, who is seen to grow thinner daily, and from whom it is expected to secure information through torture; and finally because all these delays gave rise to many arguments, conversations and speeches which were already too numerous, and that it was important to end and efface as much as possible the ideas and the memory of such an attempt.

The sitting has been postponed to Wednesday next, 9th of this month.

The meeting began to-day, a little after eight o'clock.

M. le Duc d'Aiguillon, who has shortly returned from Brittany, was present.

The first affair taken up was that of the eighty-five-year-old priest, named la Chapelle, who, it was claimed, had revealed to the grand referendary of Poland, M. Zalusky, projects of a conspiracy against the King's life: knowledge of these statements had been obtained from a saddler of Paris, which furnished the occasion to investigate the source.

The referendary who appears to be on very friendly terms with M. le Prince de Conti had permitted that mention be made of the speech of that Abbé la Chapelle, but he did not wish to be compromised in the affair.

The matter was traced back to its source and the discovery made that it was but the reviving of a discourse which the said Abbé la Chapelle claims to have heard eleven years ago, a discourse *which might have unseasonably compromised some for-*

eign powers, without any useful result; this consequently caused this matter to be dropped.

Then, the reporter gave an account of the examination made in the Saint-Joseph affair, as a result of the last meeting.

The old evidence had to be re-read.

I have already twice spoken of this affair and I have said that the one who said on Wednesday, January 5th, on returning to the convent: "The King has been assassinated or will be this evening," is a *pensionnaire* aged thirteen and a half years, named d'Escoufflet; that another *pensionnaire,* named Geoffroy, of the same age and intimate friend of the former, is the one to whom she whispered what I have reported, requesting her not to mention it to anyone, as she would be scolded, her sister having forbidden her to speak of the matter.

The important question in all this affair is to know whether the words were uttered on Wednesday, the 5th, or on Thursday, the 6th.

Little d'Escoufflet has two sisters, one of them married to the adjutant of the Invalides, named M. de la Coudre; and the other a *pensionnaire* at the Petites-Cordelières, who is known by her

maiden name, but who is said to be married and separated from her husband.

In the course of the examinations and evidence, it appears that the sister with whom little d'Escoufflet went out visiting and who so earnestly requested her to be silent, is Mme. de la Coudre, although mentioned in the various testimonies of the little girl only as *my sister.*

It had already been proposed at the last meeting to issue a warrant of arrest against Mme. de la Coudre: the opinions were divided, and a majority of votes decided on a summons to be heard.

At this meeting, the evidence seemed so strong that a warrant of arrest was almost unanimously decided on.

Some difficulty was experienced in coming to this decision, because Mme. de la Coudre is three months with child.

The question also came up to issue a warrant of arrest against little Geoffroy, on the ground that, through the speech of little d'Escoufflet, she had knowledge of the plot against the King as early as Wednesday, the 5th, at half-past three or half-past four, for there are variations as to the time,

but that this makes no difference; and that she only mentioned it on the 12th, when questioned.

Sentiments were much divided with regard to little Geoffroy and the motion only passed with a majority of thirty-one to twenty-seven to issue a writ of arrest.

It might seem, by this calculation, that there were but fifty-eight judges, but it must be remarked that, when the votes are counted, the brothers-in-law, the father and the son, make but one vote when they are of the same opinion.

To give an example of this, M. le premier president and M. de Maupeou, his son, make but one vote; M. le Duc d'Orléans, M. le Prince de Conti and M. le Comte de la Marche make but one vote; M. le Prince de Condé and M. le Prince de Soubise, his father-in-law, make but one vote; as do also M. le Duc d'Uzès and M. le Duc d'Autin.

The length of all these discussions and the excessive cold was the cause of the session being suspended to enable the members to get warm: the interruption lasted about a half hour.

They then brought up a very mixed-up affair and of great detail: it is with regard to the exam-

ination of a scoundrel, a soldier of the guard, called Fricard, arrested at Montdidier and convicted of murder.

The trial of this man for his crime, was begun, and he has been transferred from the prisons at Montdidier to those of la Conciergerie.

It is this wretch who has testified against several persons among whom it appears that there is one who is the chief of five others, whom it seems took at least a part in the project of assassinating the King.

A letter written to one of these five, named Andouet, was mentioned, a letter not reported, but which the scoundrel Fricard claims to be very strong; a letter sought for but not found: in spite of that, as it is seen by the evidence, that a poniard was purchased, and as precautions even the most useless must be taken in such a case, five persons were ordered arrested by means of three warrants, because there was but one for three who are not named, and who are only called *certain individuals*.

After such long discussions it seemed as if the meeting might be adjourned, inasmuch as it had been agreed that another meeting should be held

on Friday, so that an account of the examination of Mme. de la Coudre might be rendered as well as that of any other knowledge which might in the meantime reach the attorney general and of which he will form a speech for the Crown, if he deems it necessary.

But M. le prince thought it well to bring forward a proposition which caused long discussions: filled with a desire to seek the least detail relative to the causes of the attempt, he said that the sergeants of the French Guards, who are entrusted with the keeping of the prisoners, and four out of twelve of whom are always, during twenty-four consecutive hours, in his room, can and must have heard all his statements, and consequently are in a position to give information on the accomplices, if he spoke.

This proposition had some ground, because M. le Duc de Biron had said, at another meeting, that an exact memorandum was kept of all that was said by this scoundrel, a memorandum filled with many impious remarks and others very obscene.

M. le Prince de Conti proposed at the same time that the different masters whom the assassin had

served be questioned, even preferably those who had employed him long before his crime.

These two propositions were not in order for deliberation: the procedure requires that deliberation be taken only on a speech for the Crown of the attorney general; so that it was first necessary to consider if they should be discussed by ordering the usual form to that effect.

Then, as I have said elsewhere, the first speakers are the presidents, beginning with the oldest; then the dean, the councilors who are in the benches of the peers, the others with the honoraries, according to their place; then the peers, beginning with the last and on to the first, and ending by the princes of the blood.

It was resolved almost unanimously that nothing could be done either in one case or the other, and that with regard to the sergeants, M. le Duc de Biron was instructed to gather together all the remarks of the wretch, and to communicate them to M. le procureur général that a distinction be made between those which were useful, from those which were impious, scandalous, obscene or indifferent.

The same was decided, relative to the masters whom the scoundrel served, that it was the part of the attorney general, to draw from them the information he might deem necessary.

The meeting closed with a proposition made by M. le Duc de la Force to make a report, at a meeting, on the three letters already mentioned, and which appeared to give some information concerning the horrible attempt.

The question also came up whether a confessor should be given to Damiens.

In the strict observance of jurisprudence, none are given to criminals except after their trial; formerly none were supplied at all; it was only in 1397 that a monk who had falsely accused the Duc d'Orléans of having cast a spell on King Charles VI, his brother, having been condemned to death, he was permitted to confess before the execution; and it was only on this occasion that confessors were allowed to criminals condemned to death, which, prior to that time was not done in France.

The inconvenience of advice which may be given by indiscreet confessors and of the news from out-

side which they may transmit to the criminals, has caused it to be resolved that a confessor be supplied only after judgment has been pronounced.

The usage of Paris requires that four doctors of the Sorbonne be destined to these sad duties.

However, in the hope that M. le curé de Saint-Paul, a wise and experienced man, and having the particular confidence of the government, might be able to give Damiens useful advice, not only as regards his salvation, but for the disclosure of the accomplices of his crime, it has been determined to appoint him as confessor.

These motives have at least been given to the public and as examples are cited the appointment of a confessor before judgment, to hear a wretch who had murdered one Andrieux: and again the two doctors of the Sorbonne, sent to Ravaillac before his trial.

CHAPTER XII

This appointment of a confessor for Damiens before his condemnation and specially of a Jansenist confessor, who was said to be a confidant of the government, was not without inconvenience.

The Molinists, however affected they may have been by Damiens' horrible attempt on the sacred person of Louis XV, said then that the tribunal of a confessor is independent of all human consideration and could not become an instrument of temporal police.

The Molinists of the Sorbonne arose even against the special choice of a Paris priest to confess Damiens, and on the remonstrances made by MM., the doctors of the house, to M. le premier president, and to M. le procureur général, with regard to the appointment of M. Guéret, curate of Saint-Paul, to prepare Damiens for death, against usage and their right, M. de Marcilly, doctor of the house, was invited to join as second to the

priest; and the confession was delayed until after the sentence.

On Monday, March 28th, the day of the execution, the two confessors, Jansenist and Molinist, presented themselves to the criminal as early as eight o'clock.

They were then told that they could not speak with him before eleven o'clock, so these gentlemen withdrew.

At the hour mentioned, they again presented themselves, and M. le curé de Saint-Paul, who had already had several private conferences, spoke to him for an hour.

Then M. de Marcilly, on his request, was permitted to enter and speak with him; this he did for about three-quarters of an hour.

After a half hour's conversation, in the presence of M. le curé de Saint-Paul, M. de Marcilly requested him to leave him alone with Damiens a few moments more.

A quarter of an hour had hardly passed when an officer of justice entered and said: "It is time, justice is ready, it is time to go."

The criminal, having reached Notre-Dame,

made apology, with the sentiments of a true penitent.

This done, the executioner approached M. l'Abbé de Marcilly and asked him if the criminal would go to the Hôtel de Ville to make his statement.

The doctor answered him: " Damiens will himself tell you what he will do."

Having reached la Grève, Damiens asked in reality to go up and there declared: " that he came to say that he persisted in his statements, that he asked God's forgiveness for having lived in a state of disobedience to the Church, for all the blasphemies he had uttered against it, against its decisions, and for all his abusive and slanderous speeches against its ministers and specially against M. l'Archevêque de Paris, whose doctrine he respected as being that of Jesus Christ.

Questioned by M. le premier president Molé on the motives of his attack, he said that *he intended to avenge the honour and the glory of the Parliament and that he thought by this attempt to render an essential service to the State.*

On the evidence given by him against the valet

de chambre or steward of M. le Marquis de Ferrière, one of the commissaries urged him on the necessity of retracting if the said evidence was false.

"I know," he said, "that I have committed a great crime in attempting to take the King's life: I know also that I should commit a greater one in falsely accusing an innocent person; being about to appear before God, I declare that I persist in my statement and I ask to be allowed to sign the present one."

The commissary said: "That is not necessary. You see, gentlemen, that the man has lost his head."

Having descended to the place of execution, and after the pains of torture, he again declared to MM., the confessors, *that he persisted in his statement and that he would have to reproach himself if, about to be judged by God, he spoke against truth.*

The clerk who was near the scaffold approached him and asked him if he had no ulterior declaration to make.

"No," replied he in firm and deep tones, "I have nothing more to say excepting that I should

not be in this plight had I not served members of Parliament," words which were heard by a great number of persons and which are public in Paris.

The clerk withdrew without writing anything and looking crestfallen.

The drawing by the horses, the tearing of the flesh and melting of the lead in the wounds being ended, the confessors withdrew to the room of the concierge to refresh themselves, and there M. l'Abbé de Marcilly said to M. le curé de Saint-Paul: "Did you hear, Sir, what that criminal just said?"

The curate turned away his head and answered by the single word: "Ah . . . !"

The Jansenist party, on its part, arose against the project of the Jesuits which inclined to impute Damiens' attempt to the magistracy.

The two parties were therefore seen embittered one against the other, each attributing this crime to the other.

At Court, the crime was used as an object of ambition; some were induced to believe that the Jesuits seeing in power the mistress of a King who was mortally opposed to them while she was the

friend of irreligion, and seeing her rule despotically at Versailles, had resolved to end an unfavourable reign by an assassination.

This party which accused the Jesuits, which was the one to which soon went the Comte de Stainville, since Duc de Choiseul, persuaded, it is said, Louis XV that his son had been the centre of the opposing and regicide party which armed by the strangest mystifications the hand of Damiens, whose imagination had been excited by the same party, so that the enemies of Monseigneur le Dauphin have not ceased to secretly torment the impressionable mind of Louis XV: and since then, they accuse that monarch with having tacitly consented to or even ordered the poisoning of Monseigneur le Dauphin, by M. le Duc de Choiseul as well as the destruction of the Jesuits over which presides with so much zeal the favourite minister of Mme. de Pompadour.

It was further said that the latter acted in the circumstance, at the prompting of an ambition anxious to continue her favour, which a second attack on Louis XV might overthrow.

The Jansenist party, when in turn accused of

having caused the attempt, replied as follows to the Jesuits:

"We have attempted to assassinate him, you say, then it would be to give ourselves a less favourable reign than that of the King, since it is known that Monseigneur le Dauphin is principally devoted to the Jesuits, who are only awaiting his reign to crush us completely."

These disputes, these respective accusations of two parties so embittered, show at least to what degree of discord and hatred they had reached, since they accused one another with the attack on Louis XV and, since then, with the death of Monseigneur le Dauphin, of which they charge each other reciprocally.

CHAPTER XIII

Louis XV, finding himself in the midst of a Court wherein the factions treated each other thus, seeing at least that its outcome had been a crime which might have killed him, was quite astounded.

His natural melancholia changed into an indolence of character, into a sort of incapacity of action.

He did nothing but through his favourite, he no longer thought but through his ministers, all things looked black to him.

He became more gloomy, more absent-minded, more taciturn and more false than usual.

It was this man frozen with terror who had to be amused; it became necessary to entertain a King which this blow had rendered absolutely inamusable.

He is known to have a certain secret correspondence [16] which since the attack has become his sole resource to emerge from his general indif-

ference; it is kept by the abbé and the Comte de Broglie, and by emissaries abroad. Men of merit are its agents.

The two brothers give to the King regularly every Sunday a memorandum of what is taking place in foreign countries; the King claims to know what is said daily in the cabinet and in the offices of the ministers of all governments; he goes farther, he believes that he will know in future all attacks against him in foreign lands.

It is claimed that the King considers as necessary to his safety the simultaneous existence of a visible political minister and of a secret one, and that he is never more pleased than when he sees them with a difference of opinion or principles.

The King then believes that he knows both sides of the question and could only know it through this means.

The Duc de Choiseul is furious; Mme. de Pompadour frets and fumes against secret correspondence.

As to the King, his impassibility is such that if he considered it necessary to his visible authority to sacrifice the two Broglies, he would sacrifice

them openly and would continue them his friendship in secret until the time had come to strike the Duc de Choiseul when he no longer required the latter to carry out certain operations which this duc has induced him to prepare, to combine, and to carry out.

Whatever the cause, the position of the Court is terrible. It is divided into the Jesuitical party of the Dauphin and in the party of the Duc de Choiseul, and of Mme. de Pompadour, fiercely against the Jesuits; and it is assured that the source is in the imprudence of Mme. de Pompadour. In the clergy the same parties show themselves.

The Parliaments present the same internal dissension.

The educational bodies are also divided; the union of parties no longer exists as in the glorious years of Louis XIV who, before becoming the instrument of Mme. de Maintenon and of the Jesuits, was everybody's *grand monarque* instead of setting us at variance.

To reign by divisions is a political monstrosity; to make use of all institutions for the glory of the King is the first of policies and if Louis XV had

confessed the services of all, he would have been served by all with zeal and with the emulation which the proximity of opposite factions spurs on; but the King who establishes two political ministries protects but one: the other is a mere figure-head.

From this point of view, his control over the actions of Mme. de Pompadour, protégée of Marie-Thérèse, and his control over the actions of M. le Duc de Choiseul, who is here the tool of the same princess, are an institution both singular and useful which may amuse, instruct, annoy, or become the voucher that our interest is or is not sacrificed in such a Court: the fact remains that the King is wild over this secret commission and occupies himself with it more than he does with the department of Foreign Affairs, where there are but timid agents who dare not assert either the affirmative or the negative, but many *becauses, ifs,* and some *perhaps,* while the correspondence of the Comte de Broglie which is the centre of activity of one hundred secret agents, is daring, penetrating, ingenious and fertile in projects; it alone can arouse the prince from his apathy and general uni-

formity of goodness, from his general tolerance and present incapacity.

I have it from good and direct source that M. le Duc de Choiseul, in spite of all his intelligence and the singular activity for which he is noted, reports but late to the Council all important happenings of Petersburg, London or even Madrid.

The King, who feels strong through the secret ministry of the two Broglies, and who allows anything to be said or done, has the hardihood to say in presence of the Council, when le Duc de Choiseul has spoken: "But, by the way, Monsieur de Choiseul, tell me something about the happenings at Vienna and at Madrid regarding this matter. . . ."

And the poor duke remains silent and sheepish; the news reaches him ten days later. At other times, the King makes wagers in the Council and says to M. le Duc de Choiseul: "Let us wager, Monsieur le duc, that such a thing will occur in the cabinet of Saint-James."

"Ah! Sire," replies the duke, "I may assure Your Majesty that the matter is not being considered."

" Not being considered! " says the King, " take this and read it! "

And then taking from his pocket into which neither Mme. de Pompadour nor young girls have yet put their hands, the King makes M. le Duc de Choiseul read aloud and always in the presence of the Council, a secret dispatch which contains a fully detailed account of what has taken place at Saint-James as well as the orders given in the matter, and M. le duc has the mortification of seeing in the hands of the King a deciphered letter with its code which he can neither read nor understand as in his offices.

Happily that MM. de Broglie are as yet neither suspected nor reputed of such depth in politics, using only in these labours persons but little known, following the example of Louis XIV, who had, as his successor has, secret agents in all the Courts.

It is assured that the expense is enormous, but if it serves the King to hasten the end of a war, or to prevent a new one, one sees how economical it is instead of expensive to the State.

This secret commission has, however, a but little known advantage.

It is unfindable for the Foreign powers, so interested in buying our diplomacy, so much so that they sacrifice, as we do, millions to win to themselves our clerks and our departments, and the mistresses of our ministers, and the lovers of these mistresses and the mistresses of these lovers, etc.

CHAPTER XIV

The secret correspondence then occupies the King, whose apathy increases with his years; Mme. de Pompadour works in another manner, in these circumstances, to cheer the King in his melancholy.

David calmed the furies of Saul with his music; Mme. de Pompadour has imagined one to arouse Louis XV from his misanthropy.

During Holy Week, Mme. de Pompadour invited the King, for some years past, to come to her apartments to attend some brilliant concerts which she arranged for him.

In the grand motets, were heard voices selected among the high talent of the capital, united to the musicians from the theatre *des petits cabinets.*

Mme. de Pompadour, Mme. le l'Hôspital, Mlle. Fel, M. d'Ayen fils, Jéliotte, a celebrated musician, M. le Viconte de Rohan, and Mme. de la Salle sang; one noticed Mme. Marchais, who was always present at these affairs. I was present, a few

years ago, at the opening of the opera hall of the château and since that time I have seen rather closely and often the amusements which the marquise prepared for the King.

Two ballets by Bernard, a prologue, an entertainment were a part of the opening programme; Mme. Marchais, a woman of very pleasant face, represented a pleasure in the *Forges de Lemnos;* Mme. le Duchesse de Brancas played Astræa; M. d'Ayen was the god Vulcan; Time was represented by M. de la Salle.

I earnestly begged His Majesty to allow me to be but a plain spectator.

In another play, for example, in *Adonis,* the M. d'Ayen who played Vulcan was Adonis; Mme. Marchais acted Love; Mme. la Duchesse de Brancas, Diana; and Mme. de Pompadour, Venus.

I looked straight into the King's eyes, to see if that Venus spoke to his heart; it seemed to me that His Majesty's eyes were dull and expressionless; therefore he became more and more disgusted with her daily, and yet such were the ties which bound him to her that this good prince was never able to send her to her husband or to a convent.

What a celebration the Court and capital would have had had he done so!

After a few years, the King tired of this sort of amusement, and after Damiens' attack, it was much more difficult to make him enjoy them.

However, Mme. de Pompadour was growing thin; the indisposition rendered her daily more disagreeable to the King, her muscles lacked solidness, her skin was livid and shiny; and the King had a terrible temperament and an imagination alive with desires.

Mme. de Pompadour thought of a singular stratagem.[17]

CHAPTER XV

A great number of the women of the Court and of the city aspired to the King's conquest in this circumstance. Several noblemen were also busy securing persons apt to captivate him. Mme. de Pompadour, noticing this eagerness, resolved to supply young ladies to the King provided that they be dependent on her.[18]

A young courtier showed one day to the King a miniature portrait which had been made with this aim in view. It was *that of a young person extraordinarily beautiful, and a thousand times more beautiful than the most beautiful one can imagine*, according to the wording of a secret bulletin of that time, addressed to Mme. le Maréchale d'Estrées.

To become enamoured at sight of the portrait of a beautiful person is a thing found in so many novels that I fear to give to these historical memoirs an appearance of fiction, if I said that

the King fell in love on seeing it. "I can not imagine," said Louis XV, "that nature has produced so beautiful a child. This portrait can be but ideal." Delighted at his first success, the courtier assured that the young lady really existed; and studying to arouse the curiosity of the monarch and to excite his desires, he added that he could show the young lady and the portrait side by side to convince the King that he had not deceived him.

This portrait represented a young person who was about twelve years of age. Her name was Mlle. ——, née de ——; [19] the regularity of her features, the ingenuousness expressed in her face, the freshness of her complexion, which could only be compared to that of a rose, united to make an accomplished beauty of her.

The King had no sooner seen her than he confessed that the painter of the miniature, far from having flattered her, had not rendered her justice.

The charms of childhood, the beauty of her form, her timidity inspired by the presence of the monarch, combined to increase the desires of Louis XV, whom so many orgies had already in-

clined to debauchery. The innocence he had expected, he found, and it has since then become known that he acquired a taste for presiding at such educations and that he promised himself to multiply them.

If beauty could have given a rank at Court, Mlle. —— would have obtained the first there; but the King who at that time still had a remainder of human respect, feared that in producing Mlle. —— in broad daylight, he might acquire the disapproval of the Court, owing to the great disproportion of age and the special impropriety of his taste for a mere child. The inexperience and artlessness of the answers and the remarks of Mlle. —— were not without disadvantage.

The King resolved to keep her in a sort of private life, to exhibit her some day to the public, if he thought it proper, attending to her education and bringing her up by degrees to the favour to which he destined her, according to circumstances.

Mme. de Pompadour, always a silent observer of all these events, appeared not to know of the

King's secret intrigue. Notified by Binet and by those of the interior of the small apartments, of all that was going on, she was fully resolved to favour this liaison in secret, to hold together and direct its wires.

To succeed in this it was necessary to procure to the King some favourable quarters, and to avoid the inconveniences of publicity by facilitating the interviews of the King and Mlle. ——, a thing rather difficult to do, because of the large following of people ordinarily attracted by the visits of a King of France who does not know, like Henri IV, the delights of *incognito:* but Mme. de Pompadour drew the King out of embarrassment by shrewdly saying that she was tired of her little house called *l'Ermitage.*[20]

She carried her delicacy so far as to leave the prince in the belief that she was ignorant to what use he might put that house. On the other hand, she assured M. le Prince Soubise that she was without anxiety with regard to Mlle. ——, who was of an age still incapable of ambition, while she would keep away from the King both the evil company and the dangerous ambition of intriguers,

as if she were not the person most out of place at Court in both respects.

L'Ermitage of Mme. de Pompadour had been built for some years at the expense of the royal treasury to serve for the pleasures of the King and of his favourite. The people, by whom she was hated and despised, on seeing this building erected, had complained loudly. The building and the garden took up a large space in the park of Versailles, on the Saint-Germain road, and the people had never patiently endured an encroachment on its walks or pleasure grounds.

It has not been said that the King was informed of the aims and official solicitude of Mme. de Pompadour: the King, however, could hardly suppose that his favourite was ignorant of the details of a liaison which was known by all the Court; but he was grateful to her for having sought to oblige him with good grace, and for her delicacy and prudence; so that in proportion as the King lost his sensual inclinations for Mme. de Pompadour, his friendship for her seemed to increase.

He therefore accepted the restitution of l'Ermitage with the more eagerness as there was

in the environs no premises more fitted to carry out the plans he had for Mlle. ——. Such was the origin of the famous *Parc-aux-Cerfs*.[21]

The imagination can not conceive anything so agreeable as Mme. de Pompadour's little house. The artist who planned and carried out its embellishment had continued the rustic appearance which it possessed from nature. Outside, it resembled to some extent the house of a farmer; the interior was in exquisite taste, analogous to the idleness and to the sensual pleasures of a great monarch.

The furnishings of the rooms was of fine chintz; landscapes, young lovers; Tircises, shepherdesses, an old hermit, and divers other figures of a kindred character, painted by the foremost painters of Paris, were its ornaments. The gardens had not the monotonous and symmetrical appearance of the parks of royal houses planned by Le Nôtre.

A long straight line and the sentiment it inspires does not please lovers. Tortuous paths, thickets, are favourable to solitary reveries and to love.

There was to be seen in the gardens of l'Ermitage a grove of roses in the middle of which there arose a white marble Adonis. The bowers of myrtle and jessamine were to be admired, the fountains, the terraces and the alleys of verdure arranged in the latest style.

It was in this house that Mme. de Pompadour had already perfected herself in the art of gallantry. If the King made an appointment with her, she went before him, and Louis came upon her disguised, now as a milkmaid, and now as a gray nun; at other times as an abbess and as a farm girl, offering warm milk to the King. Some days she dressed as a woman gardener or as a peasant, and on others as a shepherdess, so hard had it become to amuse a King devoured by melancholia.

When this game of artifice had become worn out, she found it pleasant to occupy the prince with the education of children just out of the hands of nature, to make of them the object of his pleasures. Entertaining a prince of this character had become the most difficult part of the favourite's occupation.

Mlle. —— having succeeded to Mme. de Pompadour in this delightful place attracted during a few months the attention and the taste of the monarch. She was lively both in mind and in manner; and showed ease in grasping and understanding all things. The King paid her frequent visits; but her life was very much retired and but few ladies of the Court had access to her. The entree to l'Ermitage was a mark of the friendship or of the confidence of the King.

One day, Mlle. —— said to the king with a mocking smile: "On what terms are you now with the old coquette?" The King, quite certain that she had not asked that question of her own accord, thought himself insulted, frowned, bit his lips, and severely looking at Mlle. ——, he ordered her to tell him at once who had prompted her to speak in that manner. Mlle. ——, in fright, named Mme. la Maréchale d'Estrées.

This lady had long lived in the greatest intimacy with Mme. de Pompadour; but the respective affection of the women being naturally not solid, quarrels separated them, and the King, having heard that Mme. d'Estrées wished to com-

mence an intrigue to ruin Mme. de Pompadour, who was odious to all the Court of France and to the nation, commanded Mme. d'Estrées to withdraw to one of her estates.

As to Mlle. ——, the King was too much attached to her not to pardon her inexperience; he continued his habits with her until she bore him a child, and he then married her to a gentleman with whom she lived honorably.[22]

CHAPTER XVI

Yesterday I went to call on M. the Archbishop of Paris; I asked him alms for an impoverished Breton gentleman who does not wish to lower himself to the extent of asking for them himself. Day before yesterday I had made my request in writing. M. de Beaumont took from his desk a roll of double *louis* and a voucher of two thousand *écus* for the unfortunate Breton, to be cashed at his agent's.

I spoke to him of the sensitiveness of the Breton; he took my letter and threw it into the fire. Suddenly, he seized, with his known vivacity, the bellows which hang at the side of the fireplace, and he uttered these words as he blew the fire: "What a good work it would be if Mme. de Pompadour could thus be consumed! she will pervert our King, she will destroy all sentiment of piety and of chastity at Court: she will be the ruin of religion in the kingdom. It

is she who is so bitterly pursuing the Jesuits." The hatreds of the two parties can only end by some great event.

Of all the places which the King confides to his subjects, there is none of so great importance in the kingdom as the Archbishopric of Paris, whose prelate is in fact the primate of the Gauls. M. de Beaumont is consulted from one end of France to the other; he is the mind of the clergy; he has more than 800,000 *livres* of revenue; if he wishes, he may cause the greatest embarrassment at Court: his place may be a means of ambition for him; it is independent and for life.

The King is willing to see M. de Beaumont a cardinal; but he demands his resignation from his archbishopric. M. de Beaumont, on the contrary, wishes to be at one and the same time Cardinal and Archbishop of Paris; this is not wanted. This is the secret of our unfortunate troubles; and what suffers? The State and religion.

Can one imagine the power of a man who has the following: first, a council; second, several hundreds of priests in and out of Paris, subject to

his orders and to his appointments; third, an infinite number of priests without benefices, and who expect some from him; fourth, Molinist monks, jealous to please him as head of party?

It is with this militia that M. the archbishop, whose heart is of gold and his head as hard and as unbending as marble, has given and will give causes to worry. M. de Beaumont, because of his violent character and virtuous heart, will of necessity have a chapter to himself in the history of Louis XV.

Mme. de Pompadour and M. de Beaumont detest one another cordially and do not conceal it. M. de Beaumont sees in her the enemy of religion, of the Church, of its ministers and specially of the Jesuits. She is the protectress of the incredulous, the atheists and the economists; she is the enemy of the Queen, of the Dauphin and of all the friends of M. de Beaumont.

Mme. de Pompadour, on her part, sees in M. de Beaumont the natural enemy of all that she loves; but what shocks her most, is to foresee that being much younger than the King, and being destined to close his eyes, the Archbishop of Paris,

interested in profiting by the terrors of the dying King to submit him to his faith, will drive away the concubine, as M. de Fitz-James drove away Mme. de Châteauroux: the Metz scene gives her constant anxiety.

CHAPTER XVII

Vainly did Mme. de Pompadour conceal her movements and intrigues to amuse the King. He finally conceived for her a secret contempt and great indifference. The murmurs of the Queen's party and of that of Monseigneur le Dauphin were proportionate to the patience of a monarch who thought he was controlling Mme. de Pompadour when she in reality controlled him.

It was seen for a long time past, that their relations would be ended by some outbreak. The friends of the favourite fearing a quarrel and a scandal, gave her all the necessary advice towards the preservation of her influence. They persuaded her to place herself at the head of the arts and to amuse the prince with them; it was specially Choiseul's advice, when they began to insinuate themselves into the King's confidence; but Louis XV is not born artistic as was Louis

XIV, and besides he does not love his good city of Paris, which it is intended to beautify, in following this project of reviving the arts.

The King forgets no insults; he feels all affronts deeply, and specially those he conceals. When at the beginning of the scandalous favour of Mme. de Pompadour, he was greeted by mournful silence at the Opera, he experienced a cruel displeasure. It was a long time after this before he re-visited his capital, where he was received, specially the first time, with cries of *"Vive le Roi!"* mingled with the request: "Bread! Bread!" which he had allowed or caused to be advanced in price; so that since then he has made up his mind to visit his proud capital as little as possible.

He therefore did not respond to the project proposed to Mme. de Pompadour, to beautify his good city, which returned indifference for indifference. Yet, it was perfectly clear that he would have brought back the Parisians to him had he done something to beautify their home.

I shall briefly explain what I have heard on this matter from Marigny, who would have asked

for nothing better than to carry out the plan, had he been permitted to do so.

The reports of travellers in London had informed us that the religious revolution in that country had caused the monks to leave, and the English had converted their churches and their gardens into superb *squares;* it is thus that they call public places made attractive by grass plots and statues.

In France, it was proposed, so as to surpass the English, to make of all the Benedictine convents, one single convent, to reduce the Capuchins to one single building and to change the gardens and vast wastes of the convents into public places useful towards the circulation of air and to the movements of commerce.

Paris gets its foul smells in the atmosphere in Summer only from the crowding of the common people and its filth; but M. the Archbishop of Paris and the religious orders themselves objecting to this concentration for the benefit of the public, appeared to entail difficulties which Mme. de Pompadour did not attempt to combat.

It was suggested to embellish the gallery of the

Louvre, and to place in it productions of all the schools. At once there arose against this project the cries of the painters who predominate. They are moved by a base jealousy that has always tormented that class of people of merit; so that Mme. de Pompadour did not insist on this point any more than she did on the others.

A plan even more sublime was presented to him, that of rebuilding the Cité of Paris, whose filthy and disgusting alleys still represent the *Lutèce* of the Franks.

This is how he was made to understand this operation. First of all, a general plan of the quarters was put before his eyes, combined with the disposition of the great buildings that are to be preserved, such as the church of Notre-Dame; covered sidewalks were to be built, with balconies above, for the first story of the houses.

Wealthy companies were to buy large squares of houses with streets about them, and raze the old buildings to rebuild according to the plan; by buying at ridiculously low prices, they sold the rebuilt houses and were, by doing away with sixteen churches to be found there, to make immense

profits, dependent of the speculation on the quarters and the plan of reconstruction; but in view of the foreseen opposition of the Chapter of Notre-Dame and of the clergy, the King did not approve of this operation.

It has been suggested that the houses on the bridges and quays be demolished, and to open a street which would make that of Tournon come to that of Seine, from which would result a street that would be among the most beautiful and straightest in the capital, which would place the Mazarin College opposite the Luxembourg. The King was insensible to this project.

It was proposed to him to at least cover the palace of the Louvre, which is one of the handsomest monuments of modern architecture, and which is not even covered with thatch; but again there appeared a man of the trade who, jealous of the beautiful simplicity of that edifice, crossed the plan of its improvement; this inferior genius wishes this palace to be ruined so as to set off his own monuments.

Painters and architects all have a vanity so ex-

clusive, so egotistic, and I may add so criminal, that they would willingly destroy the masterpieces of their predecessors in architecture in favour of their own productions.

There is not one beautiful edifice conceived in France by an architect of the times of Louis XIV which, if you confide its care and its completion to one of our subalterns, does not run the risk of being re-modelled or rather spoiled by the new ideas of that artist. And yet it is claimed that the beauties and rules agreed upon in architecture are those of all times and of all places. This sickness of destruction is in truth common to the architects of all countries; each architect of Saint-Peter at Rome has altered the nature of aims and designs of his predecessor.

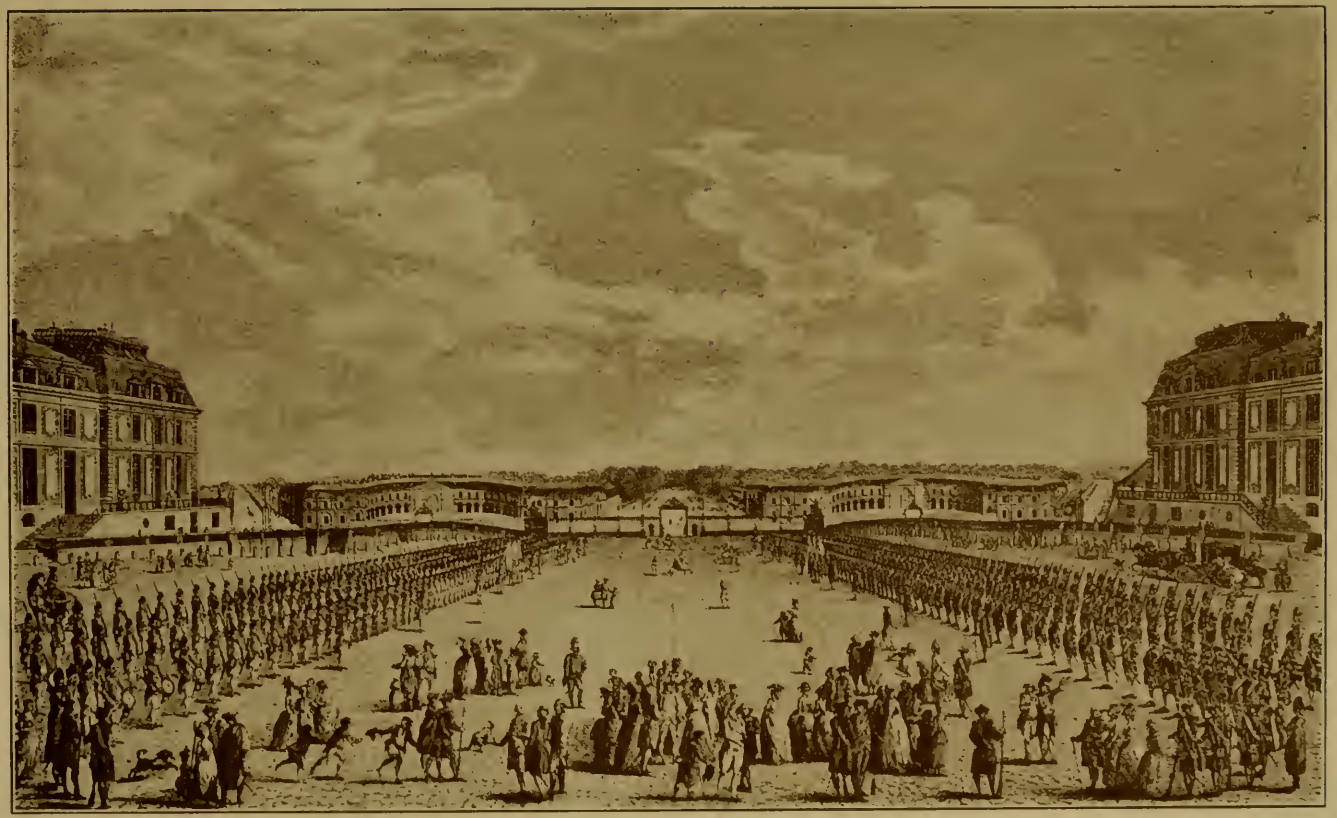
To this plan, others have been proposed, that of selecting at all corners of Paris, and at equal distances, blocks of houses, surrounded by four streets; the result of the taking away of these isolated blocks would form public places which would cost only the purchase amount of the ground, for which besides, the owners of the build-

ings fronting on these, would be compelled to contribute in view of the increase of value of their property.

These easy constructions, not expensive, would change the capital, still so Gothic and so barbaric in the oldest quarters, into a city which could not be compared to any other in Europe.

In this case, the interest which the public health inspires was set forth; it was shown that the illnesses which, every Summer, cause ravages in Paris, are due to the filth of such and such a quarter, vile sewers, artisans' houses, crowded together, and from the stagnation of air in streets that are muddy or damp in all weather, when they are narrow and the houses there are four or five stories high; so that the city of Paris is still the *Lutèce* of the ancients, or city of uncleanliness.

The King was not more sensible to this project; and Mme. de Pompadour, who would willingly have amused him with demolitions and rebuildings, specially with the creation of the *squares français,* which, without construction, would give to his capital a form which no one can imagine,



A VIEW OF VERSAILLES IN THE TIME OF LOUIS XV

has been unable to induce him to please the Parisians, who are very fond of these sorts of destructions and new edifices, and above all have the vanity to wish that the sovereign should do something for them and for the beauty of their home.

It has been proposed to go to the expense of another Hôtel-Dieu, to leave a bed to each patient; this plan is not ripe; the poor lack an advocate at Court.

In truth, the King has secured for himself, at Choisy, a pretty hunting house; he has consented to build Belle-Vue for his pleasures, and the church of Sainte-Geneviève as an act of piety.

The project of the Ecole Militaire has succeeded, because Mme. de Pompadour has incessantly placed before his eyes the necessity of distinguishing himself by a monument, mentioning as examples the *Invalides,* the *Val-de-Grâce, Saint-Cyr,* the *Tuileries,* the *Louvre, Versailles,* etc., which are great and beautiful monuments which remind us of the ancestors of our Kings.

Mme. de Pompadour, who is afraid, she says, to be thrown in the common sewer, either by the clergy, by Monseigneur le Dauphin, or by the peo-

ple of Paris, has laboured to assure herself of burial; so as to deserve it, she cherishes the reconstruction of a church; which would you say? that of Madeleine Pénitente; but the King who is secretly ashamed of his libertine life, informed that the favourite had the ambition to secure a distinguished burial (when Mme. de Mailly, repenting of having been his first mistress, wanted to be buried in the cemetery of the Innocents, and even under the sewer) not wishing to leave a monument for posterity, which preserve the memory of the impropriety of his attachment for a woman detested by all, secretly crosses Mme. de Pompadour's project in that respect, and if she does not change her mind, I am quite sure that if the King survives her, orders will be given so that the remains of Madame be very humbly deposited in an unknown spot, if not ignoble or mean; and if a word from someone can influence this act, I promise that it will be uttered.

The King was more favourable towards Mme. de Pompadour's plan relating to the porcelain manufactory of Sèvres. When Mme. de Pompadour was declared the favourite, porcelain in

France was but a grotesque and clumsy imitation of faces, flowers and personages of Japan porcelains; our efforts stopped there. Mme. de Pompadour felt how worthy it was of France to have a porcelain manufactory, as she has those of Gobelins, Savonnerie, of mirrors, etc.

Chemists to improve the paste, painters of flowers and of landscapes for the ornamentation, sculptors to create the most beautiful shapes were called to perfect this art. The French are so ingenious! All the arts vying with one another combined to create this one in a short time. We had pieces of porcelain and services superior to those of Saxony.

The King, this time, was sensible to the progress of an art which permitted him to secure from its manufacture table services worthy of being presented to sovereigns.

The manufactory was established at Vincennes; the King had it removed to Sèvres, he asked to be one of its stockholders, and he enjoyed visiting it frequently.

Before this establishment which has given birth to so many other manufactories, France purchased

yearly from the Saxons or from the Chinese from four to five hundred thousand *livres* worth of porcelains.

At the time this article is being written, the foreigner buys our porcelains for a greater amount, which supports our workmen, enriches the heads, and increases the opinion which foreigners have conceived of our capacity for undertaking all and perfecting all; therefore we shall render to Mme. de Pompadour the acknowledgment due to truth, regarding the protection she granted this art.

Why have we no greater number of acts to quote to her credit? The following article is also in her praise.

CHAPTER XVIII

If nothing ever amused the King, people will ask why he kept for so long and until her death a woman of that sort, while he dismissed his most favourite ministers.

Those who are acquainted with the inside of Court life know that the King is informed of all the intrigues existing in France against him and of all the dissatisfaction of the public against his reign.

The King is secretly satisfied that Mme. de Pompadour passes in the public mind as the sole cause of all the misfortunes of the State. It has even been assured that she made the King comprehend that it was expedient that all the dissatisfaction of the people should fall on her, subject to her finding an honourable shelter, should destiny condemn her to survive the King.

For several years, the Parliaments bored the Court with their endless complaints and remon-

strances. It is in the interest of the King, according to this policy, that their debates be directed against the favourite if needs be.

In the ancient clergy, in the prelates named by a pious man, M. de Mirepoix — it sees only censors of the prince's conduct, it is therefore expedient that their hatred should strike a woman who has influenced Louis XV.

In the country everybody complains that the Court oppresses the State, despises the people, overwhelms them with taxes which can no longer be collected but by exactions; it is well, under the circumstances that a single head be the object of the maledictions of the plowman.

Mme. de Pompadour told the King that she felt relieved to see that she lightened his troubles; she told him that the discontent of the people, the day she should leave the Court, would fall back on the monarch exclusively, seeing that the Dauphin is esteemed and that the Queen is null and respected.

These observations have induced Louis to keep a mistress whom he can not bear in her person, who has made use of all means of pleasing, who

has passed the age of thirty-six, who has not been beautiful, pretty, agreeable, nor interesting for more than ten years.

Besides, these rumours of the people, of the clergy, of the Parliaments are nothing in comparison with the effects of the general dissatisfaction on account of the tax.

The French are not even the farmers of their possessions; the fiscal art has so multiplied, increased, varied, shaded into a thousand forms the tax and the Court increases its expenses to such an extent that the King has so far lost the affection of his subjects, that he may never recover it; sad and dangerous position, for every day the periodical payment of the tax augments the clamour, the fears and the protests.

CHAPTER XIX

Monsieur le Duc de Choiseul, whom we see surrounded by so much power, having affected to take pattern upon the tone of Mme. de Pompadour, is in league at Court with the same parties as she and shares with her the dangers of the hatreds which they both have created for themselves as much through their principles as through their political operations.

Mme. de Pompadour and M. le Duc de Choiseul have equally protected the free-thinkers of their time and they have given life to the party of the incredulous which before had never dared to expose their dangerous opinions.

Both have protected the enemies of the Jesuits in secret, and prepared and accomplished the destruction of their order: they will not rest until they have succeeded in destroying it in all Europe. Both have perverted the exterior policy of the House of Bourbon and disgraced the dearest

maxims of Henri IV, of the great Cardinal de Richelieu, of Louis XIII and of Louis XIV.

Both together have combined to make of the King an insignificant prince, with the exception of the resolute character which they have developed against Frederick II, whom they have succeeded in making an enemy of France. Both have been the instruments of Marie-Thérèse, to perform here the changes which her policies wished to perform.

Both have detested the posterity of Louis XV and the duc has dared to make use of expressions, and even to write letters which I have seen, written throughout in his hand, which show that he had a secret and sovereign contempt for the royal family.

Both would have been equally odious to the whole of France as they are to one-half of the powers of Europe, if both had not granted to their creatures, to the tattlers, to the dangerous intriguers of the Court and of the city, pensions whose total sum amounts to eleven millions!

Eleven millions! to reward yearly the silence and the tranquillity of the enemies of M. de Choi-

seul and of Mme. de Pompadour, that is to say, to silence all the French who are attached to the religion of their fathers, and to the exterior policy of the House of Bourbon.

The eleven millions are not however sufficient to hush up the resentment of the public. A dull complaint is heard from every corner of France, a nation prouder and better educated than any other in Europe, at what is going on to support a war (that of Seven Years) which covers us with ignominy.

No power, no passion, can neutralize the anxieties caused by the degradation to which the Duc de Choiseul and Mme. de Pompadour have led us, by a war of which we neither see the end nor the outcome, to ruin the King of Prussia, after having ruined ourselves in 1741 to help him place himself on a level with the great powers.

All that may be done to palliate this actual position of the monarchy and the parties of M. de Choiseul and of Mme. de Pompadour, will only tend to increase the just resentment against their union; besides they have both in the Ducs de Richelieu and d'Aiguillon active enemies who

will not forget them under the circumstances and who are secretly devoted to Monseigneur le Dauphin.

Few people know the cause of these dangerous disputes. They date from the fatal time of the attempted assassination of Louis XV, an epoch which was the source of so many other occurrences which have not ceased to give anxiety to the state. M. d'Aiguillon, who was at his post, hastened to appear at Versailles and took his seat in Parliament, as a peer, to judge the scoundrel and play a character at the Court.

M. le Duc de Choiseul, at that time Comte de Stainville, had already left Rome and was then at Venice; he hastened to Paris also, to turn the events to account; he owed his rise to the favourite, whose power was in danger at Versailles on the day of the attack.

The duc and the comte being at the château, were among the first to express the two most dangerous opinions for two courtiers. The duc said aloud with his well-known tone: "That the fanaticism of the demoniacs of the Parliament had armed the hand of the parricide and that

there were good proofs of this." The comte replied that he brought from Rome proofs wholly contrary to this; he said that the Jesuits, and the Jesuits of Silesia, were not strangers to it.

The first by his statement indirectly paid his court to Monseigneur le Dauphin and the latter to the favourite who had just declared war on Frederick.

The Duc d'Aiguillon is the friend of Monseigneur le Dauphin and the Comte de Stainville has resolved to depend upon the favourite and on the Parliaments to support his elevation and the stability of his power. The opposite systems of these two ambitious men have begun and will continue the desolation of the monarchy.

CHAPTER XX

Marshal de Richelieu and Mme. de Pompadour hated one another and did not conceal it. Mme. de Pompadour hated that courtier because, wholly occupied also with helping the King pass the time, he had succeeded as she had in insinuating himself in his good graces and in obtaining his favour. However, the idea that they could render one another very good and very bad services induced them finally to affect a consideration and even a reciprocal friendship.

This agreement of interests had been in existence for some time, when hatred on the one side and jealousy on the other tightened the bonds of their alliance. Marshal d'Estrées was the sorry object of this hatred and jealousy, the result of which was the recall of the general, at a time when he was occupied in following up a victory which he soon saw crowned with the most brilliant successes.

These are the causes of M. d'Estrées' disgrace. Marshal de Richelieu, who succeeded him in the command, lost all that his predecessor had won in less time than he had taken to conquer it. It has been generally reported that the latter when commandant in chief, in gratitude for the service rendered him by Mme. de Pompadour, sought to reward her bounty in a manner as satisfactory to her avarice, as the recall of M. d'Estrées had been to her vindictive mind.

This reward consisted in closing his eyes on the irregularity of the traffic which she carried on in the line of food for the army. She appointed the commissaries, the clerks, and generally all those who were employed in this department; and she always appointed those who had given most, without inquiring if they were the most worthy for the offices.

However, it is known that after having lost the command of the army in Germany, the reception of Marshal d'Estrées at Court was most gracious on the part of the King, who could not help but render him the justice which his services deserved.

The King gave him to understand that he would be delighted to have him go and see Mme. de Pompadour. The marshal did so and she affected a face composed of what sweetness has most gracious and falseness most deceitful.

On greeting her, M. d'Estrées made her a deep bow and said: "It is by order of the King that I come to bow to you: I am perfectly aware of the sentiments you have for me, but I have too much confidence in the justice of the King, my master, to believe myself obliged to fear them." Hardly had he finished this speech when, without awaiting a reply, M. d'Estrées returned to the door and went out. Mme. de Pompadour was never so embarrassed, the military tone of the general amazed her; from that time on she was reduced to raising against him the unpleasant affairs known to the public.

The sacrifice of M. d'Estrées in circumstances so critical, had been preceded by that of one of the King's principal ministers. I refer to M. d'Argenson, another victim of the malevolent genius who presided at all the deliberations of the Court.

I have held back until this moment the narra-

tion of what happened at the château, in the favourite's apartments, at the time of Damiens' attack. Consternation there was general, the King believed himself lost, the Holy-Sacrament was exposed in Paris and at Versailles. The King, who had become converted in 1744 at Metz, again became converted on the day of the crime.

It may be imagined that Mme. de Pompadour did not fail to hasten to the King's side to prove her tender attachment by her tears. But all respectable persons, all the ecclesiastics who surrounded the prince, gathered together to repel her.

The King was confided only to the cares and tenderness of his family, and M. d'Argenson, the minister, finding the opportunity to satisfy his hatred for Mme. de Pompadour, distinguished himself among those who repelled her when she dared present herself at the King's door.

The triumph of the priests and of the minister were not of long duration. Mme. de Pompadour, furious at not having been able to act her

part, purposed to avenge, if possible, the affront done her with so much audacity.

The wound being very different from what had been expected, the very next day ceased to give anxiety as to its outcome. At the end of two or three days, the King, almost cured, was able to be up and around and as he had done in 1744 he resumed his mode of living.

One of his first visits was the one he made to Mme. de Pompadour. She received him in a manner most apt to cause pity. Her eyes full of sorrow, her face wet with tears, announced a distress that could not fail to produce the effect she expected.

After having congratulated him again and again on his fortunate return to health, she broke out into bitter complaints on the conduct of others towards her. She ended by saying: "That since it was forbidden her to see him in the time when her duty demanded it most, and when he himself had the greatest need of it, she could not do better than to withdraw in time to deprive her enemies of the malicious joy of repeating such an outrage."

This threat to withdraw, a threat which this woman hardly makes but when she is assured not to be taken at her word, had all the possible effect on the King's mind. He resolved to give her most striking satisfaction, and to grant her what she would have been unable to get or have dared to ask. He began by exiling the over-conscientious bishop, with three or four courtiers who had shown an excess of eagerness in forbidding her the door. M. d'Argenson was disgraced and obliged to resign his charge.

It might be believed that in appointing as his successor the young Marquis de Paulmy d'Argenson, his nephew, the King had the intention of mitigating the grief and the disgrace, but it was nothing of the sort. The nephew does not resemble the uncle.

The King was pleased with M. de Paulmy, because he had always acted very properly towards Mme. de Pompadour; the uncle, on the contrary, had made no mystery of the contempt he felt for her. She had long awaited the opportunity of making him bear the burden of her

resentment and none could be more favourable than this.

M. de Paulmy d'Argenson did not long hold his uncle's position; force of circumstances has just driven him from it for having shown too much zeal in serving the hatred of Mme. de Pompadour against M. d'Estrées; her favour was unable to protect him, so true is it that as soon as matters at Court have taken an ill-regulated course, the credit of even the most powerful is no longer of any use; this happens often when all is directed by the caprice of a woman such as the celebrated marquise.

To oppose her views, to contradict her, this is the sure way to find disgrace; to follow her will blindly, is to expose one's self to the same danger, because the results of an action are always put down against those who perform that action and rarely against those who order it. Such was the case of young Paulmy d'Argenson; the poor man fell for having obeyed.

Seconded by M. Rouillier, he went so far in the interest of Mme. de Pompadour as to take sides

with M. de Maillebois against M. le Maréchal d'Estrées. The latter having justified himself in the manner he did, it was necessary to sacrifice them both to the clamours and to the vengeance of the public, which often dictates to the most despotic power by obliging it to temporise and to retain the measures which it seems to prescribe to the King.

But that which has most astonished the world, is that M. de Machault, Keeper of the Seals, was dismissed from office at the same time and day as old d'Argenson. He was at the head of a party opposed to the last named minister and everyone knew that he was one with Mme. de Pompadour.

It is true that he exhibited some warmth in the remonstrances he made relating to the excessive expenses required by the King's little suppers, to which had been adjoined the department of pleasures. Those who find more pleasure in fathoming matters than in carelessly skimming the surface, thought they saw in those contrary disgraces the evidence of shrewd politics with which

Mme. de Pompadour has always been credited.

I am going to enter into a few details as regards the secret causes of Mme. de Pompadour's conduct in sending away M. de Machault, her favourite minister, and M. d'Argenson, her acknowledged enemy.

You are acquainted with the dispute set up between the clergy and the Parliament with regard to their respective prerogatives and on the use of their rights. The clergy claims to have the right to refuse communion to the dying, and the Parliament claims to have the right to order them to administer it. The scenes relating to these discussions are most disgraceful and cause the King the greatest solicitude.

The clergy refuses to believe the King competent to judge the dispute; the Parliament looks upon the clergy as rebellious to all laws. Whose side shall the King take under the circumstances? If he took that of the clergy, the Parliament would at once take up more embarrassing matters; if he took sides with the Parliament, the clergy would stir up a fanatical multitude. If the people re-

fused to serve the clergy against the Parliament, there would result an injury to religion which the Court wished to avoid.

There were in this quarrel four things to be considered: the King, the clergy, the Parliament and the populace, the eternal instrument of all that stirs it up and pays it. The alternative and even all the chances were terrible, the choice of means was impossible.

The King was in the most cruel embarrassment; it was Mme. de Pompadour who had the cleverness to cut the knot which she called Gordian. She advised the prince to hold the scales between the two parties without declaring himself either for the one or the other, but reserving the opportunity to cast the weight on the most expedient side. In the meantime the King was to leave to the clergy and to the Parliament their bones to gnaw as a pastime to which they seemed so attached.

It was owing to these resolutions that the Parliament and the Archbishop of Paris, leaders of the disturbances, were exiled in 1757, the one one way, the other another, which gave the King a reputa-

tion for neutrality, which also had its particular effects. M. d'Argenson, leader of the clerical party at Court, and M. de Machault, leader of the opposite party and favourable to the Parliament, were also dismissed.

M. de Machault, since his famous edict which prevented ecclesiastics from acquiring property, was odious to the first order of the State. He had therefore become dear to the Parliament, which was then striving to curb it and as the clergy could not bear Mme. de Pompadour, M. de Machault became a faithful servant to whom she could accord entire devotion.

M. d'Argenson, for contrary reasons, was at that time of discord the head, at Court, of the opposite party; and as both were accused, as it was called, of fighting in council with *coups de Clergé* and *coups de Parlement,* the necessary result of Mme. de Pompadour's system was that both should be dismissed.

She did not in the least scruple at sacrificing M. de Machault, her friend, so as not to deprive herself of the sweetness of vengeance by ruining M. d'Argenson, her enemy, because at Court one

could not subsist without the other, without injuring the system of neutrality to which all was adapted.

The difference of the treatment of these two ministers sufficiently shows the different motives existing, in depriving both of their offices. M. d'Argenson was sent away without any of the marks of kindness that serve to mitigate the rigours of a disgrace. Yet few sympathised with him in his misfortune. Besides there being in him something austere and forbidding, his character was unfeeling. He was recognised as one of the greatest zealots of arbitrary power. This explains why people were not sorry to see him endure reverses although it was known that he hated Mme. de Pompadour.

M. de Machault, on the contrary, was continued in a large pension and he was granted what is called military honours. As he possessed more probity than his rival, he was more pitied, and the protection which he always accorded to the Parliament served to efface what might have been objected to in his complacency for the King's mistress.

We have noticed that everybody was of the opinion that the Marquise de Pompadour had influenced the King. This thought resulted for her in the outcome that she must naturally have expected; she was treated with contempt by both parties; both felt that they had become the plaything of her ambition, without her having any consideration for either.

Even those who had sided with neither party and in general all those who loved the King and the State did not much admire the plan followed. They saw in this system of neutrality much more of the ruse of a weak woman than of male and prudent courage.

They admitted that the invention was fine, and that it was well superintended to reach the goal intended of neutralizing the people of whom the Parliament and the clergy wished to dispose in imitation of one another; but moreover, they only looked on it as a dangerous palliative which, far from removing the evil, only served to keep it in a state of covered fermentation which might soon produce a new and much more violent eruption than the first.

Besides, it seemed shameful on the King's part to have, for two interested reasons, neglected to re-establish a peace which could not be too soon signed, had the happiness of the people been as much at heart as their money.

Let us speak frankly with regard to propriety; this conduct was nothing better than that of a subordinate mischief-maker who goes about sowing petty hatreds and disputes to profit by them.

Under these circumstances, all conditions and all classes of the people were in accord in their dislike of Mme. de Pompadour; the Parisians, specially, never missed an occasion to give her the most obvious evidence of their hatred.

Every time she went to Paris, the populace ran in crowds behind her coach, overwhelming her with reproaches and insults. Things went so far that for some years she has not dared to return there except *incognito*. The provinces, following the example of the capital, detested her.

The people never like the mistresses of their Kings; they believe that the supreme rank which they occupy makes decency and deportment an inviolable duty to them and that they are wholly

inexcusable when they set a bad example. So that, when at Court, the King and princes set a scandalous example, the dissatisfaction of the people must necessarily break out, and it lets fall all the bitterness of its hatred on the person whom it considers the author of this dissoluteness.

The Frenchman, however, does not expect to find in his Kings enemies of intrigue: perhaps he does not even wish them to be.

The Frenchman has never been a Jansenist by nature; but he is so in opinion, and would like that this intrigue should remain within its just limits, and that it should not offend the rules of propriety nor national customs: otherwise the people form an opinion which becomes the never-dying worm of Kings when they have a conscience and feeling.

It must even be said that this opinion is a guarantee of public morality which has no greater plague than the vices of the courtiers which always tend to the ruin and the degradation of nations.

Besides this general motive of the people's hatred, there were several others that embittered

them towards the marquise; the lowness of her origin and her state of married woman, taken by force from her husband, in spite of a right which has always been looked upon as sacred among polite peoples.

The subsequent consent, tacit or forced of the husband, did not mend the evil; it proved at most the abuse of a despotic power or the abuse of its stratagems; and yet it must be said, to describe the actual state of our morals, that several courtiers spoke against the King's conduct only because he had not stolen their wives.

It was besides with extreme displeasure that people saw the Queen and Mesdames de France obliged to be content with a set maintenance, although proportionate to their rank, while the marquise rolled in immense and scandalous wealth and could dispose at will of the favours of the King and the treasures of the State.

The same grief was felt when it was considered that the same servile dependence attached all to her caprices.

The ablest ministers, the greatest generals of the army, were either vilely submissive, or unjustly

sacrificed to her vanity and to her vengeance; and she who had been drawn from the mire in a manner equally scandalous and unpardonable, proved by her conduct that she always took the act of governing the King for that of governing the Kingdom.

But one of the greatest reproaches to be made against her was the unheard-of traffic she made of offices and the profit of which was all for her.

This traffic tended visibly towards perverting the nation which henceforth was no longer ill served but by subjects solely occupied in drawing all possible interests from their purchase. She had already ruined the Kingdom wholesale by a bad administration and she now sold it daily at retail to the highest bidder.

It is known that she wanted to buy from the King of Prussia the principality of Neufchâtel, one of the provinces of Switzerland. The negotiations were begun, conducted and closed in the matter, and the money even passed into the hands of that monarch in the time of a war with France, a thing which can only be looked upon as a sort of treason, if the right had not been reserved to

make the contract public as soon as the circumstances would allow.

It must be admitted that we lack the acts and the evidence of the facts to legally prove this accusation; but, however that may be, the motive of the purchase is known; Mme. de Pompadour, aware of the hatred she had drawn to herself and the danger to which she would be exposed if the King, chancing to die, left her to the mercy of her numerous and powerful enemies, and of his son, had taken the wise precaution to secure for herself a safe place of refuge.

Her intention is to flee at the first assurance that the King is dangerously ill and to withdraw to a domain; but who knows if, deprived as she is of children and of the hope of having any, she will not allow herself to be influenced by the example of Flora and if she has not already resolved to imitate that celebrated Roman woman by securing to France a province which she may leave to it after her death.

Mme. de Pompadour knows what Mme. des Ursins attempted in a matter of that sort. However, although it is quite true that ambition and

ruse are essential parts of her character, it would be wrong to believe that through such mean qualities no virtue is seen to shine; it is in vain that one would imagine that she has accomplished all that she has, without merit, without a single admirable quality which could speak in favour of her evil ones, conceal them and aid them the more easily to accomplish their end.

First of all it is incontestable that, in spite of its efforts to find things of which to reproach her, the world has been unable to impute to her any of those coarse intrigues which the sole name of King's mistress causes one to suspect, and of which it was perhaps expected that this history was filled; but truth has within it a pleasure too lively and sublime that one should not be easily consoled in having made a mistake in one's conjectures.

With the exception of the downfall caused by the King, she could not be blamed for aught she had done since then against her virtue, yet she is no better for all that. She may, it is true, pride herself of this to her lover, but the world will not esteem her the more for it.

It is but too well known that it is neither to a

natural unfeelingness, nor to the fear of the outcome of an irregular life that she owes this chastity, but rather to the interested passions of which she was the plaything. These passions so mastered her that she had become insensible to the feelings of love, and incapable of intrigue, which is so often mistaken for love, of which it uselessly usurps the name.

Yet these are attachments over which nature, that powerful mother of both, has a power much more real than over the criminal inclinations which draw it; she might perhaps be pardoned had she been able to make use of the pretext that she loved the King, but he is perhaps the only being who honours her with the belief that she loves him, or that she loves anyone but herself.

Besides, it is not believed that amours of caprice or of passage, and a few other amours required by circumstances and of policy contradict this article. I have written their story in only fifty pages, under the title of the *Galanterie de la Cour de Pékin;* by that title I may be recognised.

CHAPTER XXI

One should not be astonished at the great animosity which has divided minds in the circumstances from which we issue (in 1757).

Louis XV received a badly sealed letter which informed him that M. the Archbishop of Paris, had contributed to the attack of Damiens. This letter had been addressed by a Parisian to another Parisian, and it had been badly sealed so that it might inspire curiosity at the postoffice from which it was directly sent to Louis XV. He periodically receives notes on all curious matters on which unsealed letters can supply him with information, and this letter was entirely unsealed.

Louis XV was furious, not against the Archbishop of Paris, but against his enemies, for he looks upon this prelate as a personage most incapable of a crime such as the one imputed to him. So that, instead of making use of the letter, he himself sent the original to M. de Beaumont with

a note in his own hand, in which he states that he wishes to give him new proof of the esteem he has for him by sending him the letter which has reached him attacking his honour, in which he has never doubted for a moment.

M. the archbishop, on receiving this letter, was as if struck by a thunderbolt; he was not ignorant of the strange rumours circulated by the enemies of the Jesuits, whose protector he was, and who attributed to the members of this Order the attack of Damiens, so that he at once left for Versailles to thank Louis XV.

Having reached his apartment, he was about to throw himself at his feet and burst into tears, when the King, stopping him, said: "Monsieur l' archevêque, learn to recognise your enemies and to soften them by a character of goodness; your good qualities are sufficient; you have my entire esteem; I have of you the best opinion in the world." After which the King turned his back on him: it is from the archbishop himself that I have this fact and he does not lie.

The enemies of Mme. de Pompadour, on their part, did not let pass so happy an opportunity to

irritate the favourite whose imagination, when the preservation of her credit is in question, is so influent and dangerous.

The archbishop was therefore led to believe that Mme. de Pompadour, by whom he knew himself to be detested, had concocted and carried out all that related to the letter.

M. de Beaumont, who should have published his charge regarding the deliverance of the King from assassination by Damiens, a few days after the 5th of January, 1757, the day of the attack, published it only at the beginning of the following March, with all the imprudent allusions I am about to indicate.

The prelate first of all represented Louis XV, as the last scion of the posterity of Louis XIV, spared by Providence in a circumstance when the French had seen the remainder of the royal family dwindle away. He showed the monarch virtuous, timid and bashful in his youth, penetrated with the fear of God during his illnesses and imploring the ministry of the Church to be saved. He draws a touching and pathetic portrait of the dispositions of the dying prince at Metz; but in

speaking of the cause of the Damiens attack, he attributes it to the errors of the times, to scandals in all states and conditions, and to the introduction in the writings and in the minds of a multitude of principles which excite subjects to disobedience and to rebellion against the sovereign.

The Jansenists attributed the attack to his party; he attributed it to philosophy; to the party of Mme. de Pompadour. He ends his charge by formally saying that "*The justice of God had permitted the production of a monster that dishonoured the century and brought sorrow to the nation.*"

Lastly, the archbishop carried imprudence, after these assertions, to the point of saying that "This attack had been committed *by treason and by design premeditated in the palace.*"

Commentaries full of malice explained to Mme. de Pompadour that the Archbishop of Paris wished thus to throw to the other side the causes of the crime of Damiens and attribute them to irreligion, to the opinions which she protected and to the independence which she favoured. Besides she could not pardon the archbishop for daring

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to address the King, sufficiently frozen with terror, in touching, persuasive and religious language to try to convert him.

The King had great esteem for his archbishop; she feared that the charge might not be sufficient to have him sent away: it was at least the opinion which the favourite had of the power of this charge. The King besides had never ceased to express some slight desire of a conversion.

It is in consequence of all these circumstances that Mme. de Pompadour obtained from the King, a short time after, that he exile M. the Archbishop of Paris, and she went about it in such a manner that the prince, feeble monarch, determined to do so.

The King, however, sent to him M. de Richelieu, who was much on the side of the prelate to urge him to yield in some matters for the good of peace, in a moment when he was most virulent about the famous *billets de confession* which he demanded of the dying before the Viaticum could be administered to them. I know that on that occasion the inflexible prelate replied to M. de Richelieu: " Let a scaffold be erected in the middle

of my courtyard and I shall mount it to uphold my rights, fulfil my duties and obey the laws of my conscience." The prelate was so excited that he would have done as he said.

The marshal replied by a *bon mot* which he has been careful to spread; he said to him that *his conscience was but a dark-lantern which lightened no one but himself;* but the prelate was more and more inflexible, and M. de Richelieu reported this to the King, who had hoped much from the negotiation of the courtier, naturally quite clever in these sorts of affairs.

After this Louis XV abandoned the prelate to his council which Mme. de Pompadour had won over one by one to cause him to be exiled, a measure preceded by the secret warning, and in friendly style, which the King had given him that he wished to exile him, while the orders of exile against the opposing party, those of the magistrates of the Parliament, had the form of a sort of disgrace and showed the great displeasure of the King.

One now sees how small this woman is in affairs; how her small passions influence the great

affairs of the State; one sees the crimes she commits to maintain her authority.

It is the first time with the exception of the Regency that in France the State treats its friends as it would its enemies.

It is not by such a punishment that the pretensions of the prelate and his ridiculous and unjust refusal of the sacraments to the dying, should have been checked.

The King, in treating in a uniform manner both the magistracy indocile by profession, through principle and sentiment, and monseigneur the archbishop who was at all times the foremost of his servants, has committed a great fault which will not be rectified; he has put on the same level against himself and on the same footing his friends and his foes.

Since then the prelate and the magistracy have been recalled; but M. de Choiseul and Mme. de Pompadour have destroyed the Jesuits in the same spirit, and to destroy them, they have restored the Parliaments which had been humiliated, dissolved and exiled.

The Jesuits crushed, dissolved and exiled also

have had friends who have employed MM. Maupeau and Terray to destroy the Parliaments and M. de Choiseul.

The destroyed Parliaments will no doubt in turn find other powers which will secure their recall, and you will see that if they return they will avenge themselves; sad result of the foolish policy of Mme. de Pompadour, who treated the friends and enemies of the State in the same manner; or rather sad result of the elevation of this wicked *grisette* by the side of a great monarch whom she causes to espouse her interests and to sign, through the medium of the ministers whom she establishes or exiles, the measures dictated by the views of a little *bourgeoise* of the capital.

It is the clergy which first fathomed the aims of the favourite and which first made them known; hence the lively feeling against it, and the resentment of the enemies which Mme. de Pompadour has raised at the Court of Louis XV.

CHAPTER XXII

The most grave objection to the power of the marquise consists in the absolute dependence of the ministers on her. It is she who selects them, who advances them and dismisses them according to her whims; and one feels how much an authority coming from so impure a source must permit itself acts contrary to the interests of the State.

This woman is odious to all the Bodies; the Church specially has in horror *a concubine* at the head of affairs, who aspires to take possession of the list of benefices.

The nobility, which is well considered in France only when it occupies the first places of the State, can obtain them only through her; in short, she is supposed to sell positions, posts and places.

The King, who feels all the weight of his chain, keeps silent; he sees his finances in disorder; he sees them abandoned to pillage, and he signs arbitrary orders to count to the marquise the one

hundred thousand *écus,* the five hundred thousand francs, as we spend in our houses a gold *louis* or a *pistole.*

And yet the King himself, lastly was presented with a singular petition at the chase from which he was returning in a phaeton with Mme. de Pompadour.

In this petition an investor asked the King, in order to assist manufactories which he desired to establish in the name of the State, that Mme. de Pompadour lend to the King fifty millions to launch successfully this great royal enterprise; the King smiled at this and Mme. de Pompadour showed great anger.

It was since this singular circumstance that she more than ever surrounded this prince with her small creatures, so well prompted that they were forbidden to tell him anything except what she wished him to know. No truth capable of annoying her can any more reach the King except in a round-about way.

The Court saw an example of this one day which it enjoyed very much. A short time before the death of the marquise, the King went to Paris,

contrary to his custom, for he has developed an extreme repugnance against that good city because of the insults to Mme. de Pompadour, who is detested there. On that day, the assembled people again followed the King's coach, but in a manner very different from the usual one. They no longer shouted: "Vive le Roi!" the air was filled with but one cry: "Bread, Sire, bread!" The guard was unable to intimidate them, for the frenzied crowd compelled it to withdraw.

The King, back at Versailles, and cut to the quick, was speaking of this reception with bitterness mingled with sadness; for he knows that he is suspected with being at the head of a wheat traffic for his own profit.

It was then that a creature of the marquise addressed the King and said that she was much astonished at the unreasonableness and injustice of a people who cried famine when they were seated on a great pile of wheat at the market. The same person added that it was at a very moderate price.

The good Marquis de Souvré was unable to hear this irony with calmness; he took his gloves, his hat, and made believe to go to the door hurriedly.

"Where are you going?" asked the King.

"Sire," replied Souvré, "if you will allow me, I am going to have my rascal of a steward hanged because he charges me for my bread double the price which this honest man tells you that it is worth." This reply, which made those present laugh, was unable to attract the King's attention.

We have seen until now that if Mme. de Pompadour had succeeded at Court as *mistress to the King,* she had been much less successful there in playing the *Stateswoman.*

Our century, however, presents the picture of two empires governed in a superior manner by several women; in Russia by the two Catherine Annas and by Elizabeth; and in Germany by Marie-Thérèse.

What Mme. de Pompadour does not know, is the art of governing and of choosing those best fitted for it, for it is precisely the man most unfit for such and such an office whom she has the faculty of choosing, to the misfortune of the Kingdom.

She has been reproached and with reason of labouring towards the destruction of all our silk manufactories. The provinces of the South, along

the Rhône specially, can pay their taxes only with their harvests of silks and cocoons. These silks and cocoons go to Lyons to quicken the commercial centre of France.

All the courts of Europe and all the nobility which exists in the universe dresses itself with those rich and beautiful stuffs manufactured at Lyons; but now it happens that English lords who travel in France have come here and have brought with them pretty calicoes which they claim beautify and rejuvenate those who wear them for *négligé*.

Mme. de Pompadour therefore wears nothing but négligés of calico; our French manufactories no longer dress Mme. de Pompadour; the fashions which come from her boudoirs ruin our industries, and the genius of our arts to the depths of our provinces.

What has become of the ministers of Louis XIV, of that King so proud of his manufactories both royal and private created by Colbert! The English dared to send us their Indian cotton goods; the King had them confiscated. He did more; he had them sent to the executioner, with orders

to dress himself in them. All the ladies were frightened at this.

There was in France a secret pleasure among the financiers and the smaller *bourgeoisie* in seeing a little *grisette* seated by the side of the King; but her affectation to thus dress herself in her *négligé*, made of foreign stuffs, and specially of English stuffs, has deprived her of the esteem of all the manufacturers who now express themselves as the others about this celebrated woman.

Yet justice is due to say that she does not love the English, nor specially the arrogance of their ambassadors, who affect a certain tone towards her. They treat her as a clerk of foreign affairs and Louis XV is distressed at this.

CHAPTER XXIII

It is impossible to imagine what trouble this woman gave the State to save her from the insults of the Paris populace. What do I say, of the populace? I should rather say of the best *bourgeoisie* and of all the Parisians and of all France.

The pit of our theatres is in Paris a House of Commons comparable in some respects to that of London! If this House could speak! If it had the right to make simple remonstrances! but it has only hands, that is all it possesses, and it uses them for applauses that are frequently severe lessons; for the pit by suspending or bestowing them unseasonably, disposes of blame and of praise with much equity or at least with fitness.

What a nation! it makes itself heard with applause granted or refused, or affected, or ill-timed.

In 1750, Mme. de Pompadour was at the Opera and was able to notice the opinion which the public had already conceived regarding her person. Op-

posite her was her husband, M. Le Normant d'Etioles; and could one imagine which secured the marks of approval, the King's favourite or the husband?

It was not she who sees at her feet the great, the prelates, the ambassadors, the generals, and this procession of ministers whom she makes and unmakes; it was the good-natured d'Etioles who was the object of the pit's applause.

Ah! the poor dear man, how disconcerted he was; I studied him carefully, through my glasses, on this occasion; he paled, blushed and darkened at a reception which he had no right to expect.

As the marquise's box was on the same side as mine and as I could not see her well, I questioned several people in opposite boxes who were able to observe her. Mme. de Pompadour's face was brazen; all that was noticed was that she bit her upper lip for quite some time.

She bore the insult as she would have done a fine harangue or else a long flattery. Since this event, Mme. la Marquise has never failed to inform her husband of the plays or concerts she was to attend; it is the tacit and acknowledged order

not to be present himself, to avoid troubles of this nature.

The good-natured d'Etioles submits to this because of Louis XV; yet when he demands that his wife use her influence in an affair, which is an extremely rare thing, and always of indispensable justice, or when he wishes to prevent her from doing something which is not in the order, relatively to the interests of the family, he says to Abbé Boyle, who is their go-between: "Tell my wife that I shall go to the château, that I have resolved to do so, and that I shall make the vaults and ceilings resound with the equity of the things I ask and demand."

Poor d'Etioles, at the beginning, did not know what to call her. *Mlle. Poisson?* She was his legitimate wife, he had had a child by her, and she was not a *demoiselle,* although no longer his wife. *Mme. d'Etioles?* She had punished at the beginning an imprudent fellow who had neglected to name her according to her new title. *My wife?* This term was reserved by M. Le Normant d'Etioles for the occasions of a threat.

One day she wished to have again the superb

portrait by La Tour which he had of her. "Go tell my wife to come and get it herself," he sent word by Abbé Boyle.

This abbé has supplied me with other details and circumstances which I have reported in this chapter.

CHAPTER XXIV

Abbé Boyle has just told me divers very piquant anecdotes about the interior of the Court, about the King, about Mme. la Marquise, about the Duc de Choiseul; it is from him that I have some of those included in this chapter.

Only a short time ago was the long-wished-for peace signed between the King and the King of England, and I do not know if Mme. de Pompadour has not herself had the abbé tell me the following.

One can not imagine the arrogance and the tone which our cabinet is allowing the King of England to affect. M. Bedford disputed the ground foot by foot on the etiquette and on the titles, to the point that it is not Louis XV who, in the treaty, is named *King of France,* but in truth the King of England; it is altogether incomprehensible, it is the world upside down. Louis XV is qualified only as *Most Christian King,* while in his qualifi-

cations, the King of England accumulates all his titles of King of different crowns.

Mme. de Pompadour became furious against M. de Choiseul, who permits in a document so solemn such a blunder, or such pretension. She told him that the treaty degraded the King and the French monarchy and it was necessary to recover from the English the title of *King of France,* sword in hand, since their King usurped it and proceed, if needs be, to that island inhabited by regicides, to avenge the honour and the independence of the Crown to thus force England as well as her prince to respect the King.

M. le Duc de Choiseul replied to her that there was in Europe an acknowledged form which did not easily permit to one of the contracting powers any changes in its favour; he said that precedence was one of the thorns of the ministry of Foreign Affairs and that usage granted to the King of England the title of *King of France.*

"I should have tolerated it for the peace of 1748," replied Mme. de Pompadour; "the King wished a treaty at all cost, but to-day must we lose our colonies, titles and honour? To whom at

least does precedence then remain? To the King of England, according to ancient usages and diplomatic etiquette? Say rather to the King of France, since, according to the form which you quote, it thus calls the King of England; for it can not be said that a king who is but half a king, such as that of the English, and who has in reality but eight millions of subjects, can raise himself either to the rank, or even less above a monarch who has twenty millions subject to his authority, without some French objections. What will all Europe and the Parisians say of us if we permit that in a treaty the King of England take from Louis XV his title of King of France and bestow on him that of Most Christian King? If I advise you, Monsieur, to make a change, and to add to that title of Most Christian King, that of King of England, do you believe that on reading that treaty, there would not be an uproar? Would you permit the signing of a treaty thus worded?"

"Louis XIV had permitted it," said Choiseul.

"It is not believable that Louis the Great ever permitted the successor of Henry VIII, executioner of the queens of England; the successor of

Mary, who drenched the island with the blood of Protestants; of Elizabeth, who drenched it with the blood of Catholics, and caused to be beheaded a dowager Queen of France, her sister, the reigning Queen of Scotland; or Cromwell, the assassin of Charles I; of William, the usurper of the throne of a legitimate prince, to take towards him, in a treaty, the tone of superiority and of precedence. I have studied my history quite well. The blood of the House of Bourbon is august; the blood of the Kings of England is ignoble and barbarian. The English people are of all people the most ferocious. Nothing must be left undone to change so humiliating an etiquette. The simple comparison of a King of France and of a King of England would be insulting. Can ferocity and civilisation be compared?

"When Louis XIV read the law to the English, he was unable to change the etiquette; we receive it now, and the occasion is not favourable; the treaty contains articles much more disagreeable. It is due to the necessity of circumstances, but these circumstances will change, I have promised the King."

CHAPTER XXV

When Mme. d'Etioles had succeeded in attracting the attention of the monarch towards her, she might have been called one of the very beautiful women of the capital, and perhaps the most beautiful.

There was in the ensemble of her countenance such a mixture of vivacity and tenderness, she was so much what is called at the same time a pretty woman and a beautiful woman that the combining of these opposite qualities made of her a sort of phenomenon.

It is not so much of the form of her face that I wish to speak as of the use she could make of it and of the mobility of her features.

That woman had so well studied her face that she could affect any expression at will.

Did she wish to impress the King? She gave herself the forms of beauty, by solely retaining the proper calmness and the peaceable and sedate air

of her face, and this calmness was necessary to the development of the beautiful forms which she combined and which were very numerous.

Did she wish to heighten the imposing calm and representative tone by some enticement? She had recourse to the astonishing mobility of her eyes and of her entire countenance and to those natural movements which good connoisseurs call vivacity; and that addition gave a new value to the beauty of her divine face. Mme. de Pompadour thus was a beautiful woman simply, and at will; or beautiful and vivacious together or alternately, which was due to the lessons which her mother caused to be given her by comedians, by celebrated courtesans, by preachers and by advocates.

That diabolic woman had sought in all the arts which demand a great and varied physiognomy, special lessons to truly make of her daughter a *morceau de roi,* a morsel which subjugated a feeble prince who was already called in Mme. d'Etioles' intimate circle: *le Roi Pétaud;* in short, to make of her a woman so bewitching that, without wishing it, she had in her youth rendered her husband madly in love with her person, as,

designedly, she had inspired the same sentiments in the King.

Besides all the attractions of a beautiful face and of a face full of vivacity, Mme. de Pompadour still possessed to a supreme degree the art of giving herself another sort of face.

The languishing and sentimental tone which pleases so many individuals or which at least is pleasant to all men without exception, in many circumstances, Mme. de Pompadour knew how to affect, when needed; so she had what people at Court have least, *the gift of tears;* but this gift the lady used but as clever comedians do in the presence of a public observant of the impression they experience. Louis XV, in this respect, was the public of Mme. de Pompadour.

How then could a null and apathetic King resist the power of such an actress, when that dangerous woman was, according to circumstances, and even at will, beautiful and pretty at one and the same time; or else, beautiful and pretty in part, and at the same time remarkable for her vivacities or her languidness? According to circumstances her face could assume a different

character: she was at will superb, imperious, calm, roguish, lively, sensitive, inquisitive, attentive, according as she gave to her glances, to her lips, to her forehead, such or such a variation or expression; so that, without changing the attitude of her body, her pernicious face was a perfect Proteus.

What a pity that with so much beauty there should have been in the middle face and in the centre of so many different expressions a disgusting habit! Mme. de Pompadour had pale and faded lips, a defect due to excessively biting them, which had broken the imperceptible veins, from which resulted a yellowish and dirty colour which appeared on them when she did not bite them or when she had not bitten them for some time.

As long as the Court has been willing to believe that Mme. de Pompadour had colour in her face, she did not use rouge in an apparent manner: she was content with a shade; then she had the weakness to speak much ill against rouge and against the ladies of the Court who "illuminated" their looks.

Her eyes have received from nature such vivacity that it seems that a light detaches itself from them when she casts a glance. Her eyes are chestnut, her teeth very beautiful, as well as her hands.

As to her figure, it is slender, well proportioned, of medium size and faultless. She knows all this so well that she is most careful to help it by all the aids of art.

She invented *négligés* which fashion has adopted and which are called dresses *à la Pompadour,* the shapes of which are such, that they resemble jackets in the Turkish style, are tight about the neck and are buttoned below the wrist; they are adapted to the roundness of the bust, and fit closely about the hips, making prominent all the beauties of the figure, by appearing to want to conceal them.

It is known besides that she disguises herself as a peasant, milkmaid, grey nun, farm-girl, or garden-maid, to surprise and incite the King.

As to the habits, to motions, and bearing of her body, as lady to the Queen, she has been only and can only be a *grisette,* for her tone is *bourgeois.*

M. de Maurepas made her say it: he did more,

he said in his songs that she was raised *à la grivoise.*

The King, shocked by her first improprieties, was obliged to tell his courtiers: "It is an education to be made, I feel it, but I must have a woman, were it only to curb the intriguers: and in a finished education, one could not find the other charms which I have noticed in her."

It has become known through the King and M. le Normant that she had boldnesses of another character; but as I am taking measures so that these anecdotes may be published at the proper time, it is useless for the public to go into these details; they could only be of use to the King's Mercury.

As to the soul affections of the marquise, it is known that she is interested only in the present; the future sometimes interests her very much; but as she does not believe in the future life, she cares little about what may be said or written of her after her death.

She has an adage, always on her lips; it is this: "After us the deluge."

Engrossed in the present, hungry for praise,

homage, respect real and pretended, natural or forced submissions, she may be seen taking part in a conversation in a fashionable salon, or taking her place at a table on arriving at a circle, with the imposing air of an exacting woman who seems to say to you on entering: "Here I am, it is I." That is the portrait I made of her twelve years ago.

This is the one I made of her in 1758, when she was said to be 37 or 38 years of age. What decrepitude! What degeneration in the form! What vileness in her face! She habitually enjoys covering her face with a layer of white and rouge; her vivacity is no longer but a grimace, a kind of sardonic laugh, and her primitive languidness a state of despondency.

She imagines, as the ladies of the Court, that with a dazzling layer of rouge she will alter the lined forms of her face: she still possesses large and beautiful eyes, but what a glance comes from those two vaults! how she combines all that is necessary to appear a wicked woman! The extreme thinness of Mme. de Pompadour, her leaden complexion, greasy, shiny and livid, were

notices which she received from nature that the machine was wearing out.

She was from that time much more wicked, more uneasy in society, and more exacting in the services and the homages which she received.

She no longer came to Paris. At Court she dared not show herself with so much audacity; she covered her face with white, red and black; the study of her looks, her toilette, her dress daily became longer and more complicated.

She saw illness coming from afar, and she found nothing in her reason, nor in her soul, which prompted her towards resignation.

Her illness is long and painful, and if it is a poison, as it is whispered, it is a very slow one.

CHAPTER XXVI

We should rejoice at the death of no one. In speaking of the death of Mme. de Pompadour, it is only permissible to rejoice at the deliverance of the King and of his kingdom.

How little was Louis XV by the side of Mme. de Pompadour! and if he had known it! He is so careful of the proprieties that he would have shattered his fetters fifteen years ago.

The public which loves to attribute the death of the prominent to secret causes has always said that the marquise was the victim of a plot.

It is more natural to attribute her slow fever to her perpetual constraint, to the affronts which she or hers receive in the capital, to the vexations which she has experienced in the destruction of the Jesuits, at her present standing with M. le Duc de Choiseul, to the shameful treaty concluded with England, to the humiliation of France, to the state of the finances, to the sarcasms which come

from Berlin, to the victories and to the tone of the King of Prussia which grieve her, to the new disturbances which arise in the Parliaments, and at her perpetual fear of the King's death and of having to go and rot in a convent by order of the Dauphin when it comes.

She has been Queen of France: Louis XV has been but the titulary and the guardian of the crown. The fear of losing her power and of again becoming a *bourgeoise* of Paris has always tormented her.

She finally saw in every Jesuit, after she had succeeded in destroying the order, only an assassin or a poisoner.

She did not have the satisfaction of seeing Monseigneur le Dauphin die; but M. le Duc de Choiseul has had the anguish to hear himself mentioned as the author of this deplorable loss, and as the author of the death of the Queen, of the Dauphine and even of that of Mme. de Pompadour.

Many variations have been seen in public opinion with regard to the attack on Louis XV.

The Jesuits did not fail to attribute it to the Parliaments and the Parliaments to the Jesuits and to the Clergy.

An opinion could at least be chosen in these contradictory accusations which, at bottom, prove nothing but the animosity of factions. But on the death of the Queen, of the Dauphine and of the son of Louis XV, almost everybody united, without a proof, to accuse le Duc de Choiseul; and this minister who heard this, who has heard the rumours, appears a simple observer of the atrocious accusation without his having punished any one.

At the archbishopric there is but one voice against him in that regard. The archbishop avenges himself with devout suavity.

The Jesuits, furious at what happens to them, attribute these crimes to M. le Duc de Choiseul and to his sister, le Duchesse de Grammont. The Duc de Choiseul has overthrown the Jesuits; the Jesuits wish to overthrow the duke.

At Court, comments are made, people read, shout hurrahs. They are uttered in the duke's

antechamber, between one's teeth. These rumours are no doubt as mortifying as ill founded, but why is M. de Choiseul a party leader?

If the marquise lived, she would no doubt be accused also. The crime is much more analogous to her character than to that of the Duc de Choiseul. Then it would not have been said that the King had permitted the destruction of the Jesuits and that of his son only as a punishment of Damiens' attack and to prevent a repetition.

Then it would have been said that the future and not the past was the cause of this perfidy. It would have been said: "Mme. de Pompadour did not wish to be sent into a convent by the Dauphin on his coming to the crown." Mme. de Choiseul takes the matter in high style: with haughtiness and contempt. For my part, I can not accuse M. de Choiseul, although he profits much by the death of the Dauphin. I can not conceal that the devout party has so well spattered him that it will be difficult for him to efface the opinion which it continues to spread. The loss of its dear Jesuits has also embittered it.

At the present writing, they are committing fol-

lies in Brittany for M. d'Aiguillon. At Paris, people will commit some against M. de Choiseul if he does not take care, and this before long. Just as M. de Choiseul will also commit some in Brittany and Paris against the Duc d'Aiguillon.

Only one of the parties aims at surpassing itself in quickness to reach the goal they have in view.

It is time to end these Memoirs; the years that are to follow will give other pictures: MM. d'Aiguillon and de Choiseul have in their opposite characters and principles the wherewithal to keep busy the Court, the capital, France and Europe.

They will put the universe in motion, because they each have the power which stirs men and empires.

M. de Choiseul has on his side the free-thinkers, the Parliaments, the political bishops, the Jansenists and the King whom he subjugates; he has aims on the Dauphin's children; he wishes to organize a clergy of his own.

M. d'Aiguillon has possessed himself of the minds of the King's daughters, of the Dauphin when he lived, of the ex-Jesuits, of the Archbishop

of Paris, of the Sulpiciens, of the devout persons of the Court and of the city, of the Molinists, of the grand council and of the pious bishops.

He wishes to take possession of Louis XV, who is already wavering between the two parties, and whose inclination will lead him to attach himself to the most religious, to the most devoted to his authority, and to the one which will leave him in peace with his mistresses.

This is the state of the Court of France in January, 1765.

WILL OF MADAME LA MARQUISE DE POMPADOUR DATED NOVEMBER 15, 1757.

In the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

"I, Jeanne-Antoinette Poisson, Marquise de Pompadour, wife judicially separated from Charles Guillaume Le Normant, equerry, have made and written my present testament and disposition of my last will, which I wish carried out in its entirety.

"I recommend my soul to God, begging Him to have pity on it, to forgive my sins, and to grant me the grace to repent of them and to die in dispositions worthy of His mercy, hoping to appease His justice by the merit of the precious blood of Jesus Christ, my Saviour, and by the powerful intercession of the Holy Virgin, and of all the Saints in Paradise.

"I desire that my body be carried to the Capucines of the place Vendôme in Paris, without ceremony, and that it be

buried in the cellar of the chapel which has been granted to me in their Church.

"I leave to M. Colin, in recognition of his attachment to my person, a pension of..... 6,000 livres
"To M. Quesnay, four thousand livres..... 4,000 livres
"To M. Nesmes, three thousand livres..... 3,000 livres
"To Lefèvre, huntsman, twelve hundred livres... 1,200 livres

"To my three women, to Mlle. Jeanneton, to my three valets de chambre, cooks, officers, steward, butler, porter, the income at ten per cent of a fund of five hundred livres; and to make my instructions more clear I shall quote an example.

"Mlle. Labbaty has been in my employ for twelve years; if I should die at this moment she would receive 600 livres of life-annuity, being twelve times fifty, at ten per cent of 500 livres of Funds, seeing that for every year of service she will be increased 50 livres more.

"I leave to my footmen, coachmen, doormen, chair-carriers, porters, gardeners, women of the wardrobe and of the poultry-yard, the Funds of 300 livres, of which they will be paid the income, following the same method explained in the preceding clause.

"I leave to the remainder of my servants who are not included in the two above clauses, 150 livres in Funds, from which they will receive a pension in the manner explained above.

"Further, I order that all pensions and foundations made in my lifetime be continued in their entirety.

"Further, I give to my two chamber-maids all that which belongs to my wardrobe, in the line of clothes, linens, including laces.

"Further, I give to my third chamber-maid a present of 3,000 livres, exclusive of her annuity; and to the woman of the wardrobe serving me daily, 1,200 livres as a present, exclusive of her annuity.

"Further, to my three valets de chambre, each 3,000 francs as a present, idem.

"I pray the King to accept the gift which I make to him of my residence in Paris, as a palace for one of his grandsons.

"I desire that it be for Monseigneur le Comte de Provence.

"I also pray His Majesty to accept the gift which I make to him of all the stones engraved by Gay, be they in bracelets, rings, seals, etc., to augment his collection of engraved gems.

"As to the remainder of my furniture and real estate, goods of any nature and in any place they may be, I give and bequeath them to Abel François Poisson, Marquis de Marigny, my brother, whom I appoint and institute my residuary legatee; and in case of death, I name in his stead and place M. Poisson de Malvoisin, sergeant-major in the army, at present chief of brigade of Carabineers, and his children.

"I appoint as executor of my present testament M. le Prince de Soubise, to whom I give the power of acting and of doing all that will be necessary for its entire execution and he may see to the exact payment of all the life annuities by me bequeathed.

"However painful may be for M. de Soubise the trust which I give him, he must look upon it as a positive proof of the confidence with which his honesty and virtue have inspired me.

"I beg him to accept two of my rings, one my large aquamarina coloured diamond, the other one engraved by Gay, representing friendship; I flatter myself that he will never part with these and that they will remind him of the person in the world who has had for him the tenderest affection.

"Done at Versailles the 15th November, 1757.

"*Signed:* JEANNE ANTOINETTE POISSON,
"Marquise de Pompadour."

On the back is written:

"I entail to Abel François Poisson, my brother, Marquis de Marigny, my land of the Marquisat-Pairie of Menars and its appendages, such as it is on the day of my death, and to his male children and grandchildren, and always to the elder.

"Should he have only daughters, the entail will not take place, and the land will be divided among them.

"In the event of my brother's death, without posterity, I appoint in his stead and place and on the same conditions, M. Poisson de Malvoisin, at the present time chief of brigade of Carabineers.

"At Versailles, the 30th March, 1761.

"*Signed:* JEANNE ANTOINETTE POISSON,
"Marquise de Pompadour."

CODICIL OF MADAME DE POMPADOUR

"It is my will to give, as a mark of friendship, so that they may remember me, to the following persons:

"To Mme. du Roure, the portrait of my daughter, in a box ornamented with diamonds.

"Although my daughter has not the honour to belong to her, she will remind her of the affection I had for Mme. du Roure.

"To Mme. la Maréchale de Mirepoix, my new watch with diamonds.

"To Mme. de Château de Renaud, a box with a portrait of the King, ornamented with diamonds, and which was to be delivered to me one of these days.

"To Mme. la Duchesse de Choiseul, a silver box ornamented with diamonds.

"To Mme. la Duchesse de Grammont, a box with a diamond butterfly.

"To M. de Duc de Gontault, a pink-coloured wedding-ring studded with diamonds, entwined with a green bow, and a box of carnelian which he always liked very much.

"To M. le Duc de Choiseul, an aqua-marina coloured diamond and a black box.

"To M. le Maréchal de Soubise, a ring by Gay, representing friendship; this is his and my portrait during the twenty years I have known him.

"To Mme. de Vamblemont, my necklace of emeralds.

"If I have forgotten any of my servants in my will, I beg my brother to make provisions for them, and I confirm my testament; I hope that he will consider good the codicil which friendship prompts me to add and which I have caused to be written by M. Colin, having only the strength to sign it.

"At Versailles, the 15th April, 1764.

"*Signed:*

"La Marquise de Pompadour."

Note.— The originals of the said testaments and codicils have been deposited with M. Baron the younger, notary, as per act of the 16th April, in which act M. Colin declared that Mme. de Pompadour, after having dictated and signed the provisions above mentioned, has charged him verbally to distribute to some poor the money he may find in the desk-shaped table belonging to Madame, for which distribution he would find in the same table a list alphabetically arranged, of the names of those to whom Madame intends that the money should be given.

Further, to generously reward the physicians, surgeons, apothecaries and assistant-apothecaries

to the King, who have seen and cared for her during her illness.

Finally, that she desired that 3,000 livres be given to Mme. Bertrand, her nurse, because she was much pleased with her.

NOTES

1. Mme. de Pompadour was fifteen years and two months old when on Thursday, March 9, 1741, at the Church of Saint Eustache, she married Charles Guillaume le Normant, Lord of Etioles.

2. Marvelous qualifications had given to Mme. de Pompadour all the charms and accomplishments which could make of a woman the perfect model of her sex.

   She sang well, played the harpsichord, danced with wonderful grace, rode horseback as but few women can, engraved, etc.

3. Louis de Mailly, marquis de Nesle, had by Armande Félicie de la Porte-Mazarin five daughters who succeeded one another in the favor of Louis XV.

   The oldest, Louise Julie, who was the King's first mistress, had been married at sixteen to her cousin de Mailly, comte de Rubempré; she was disgraced Nov. 2, 1742 and retired to a convent.

   Pauline Félicie, two years younger and who succeeded her, had married the Marquis de Vintimille and died suddenly bearing a son to the King.

   After a few months of sorrow, the youngest of the Nesle sisters, Marie Anne, in 1734 Marquise de la Tournelle, became in turn mistress to Louis XV.

   Lady of the Queen's palace (1742), and made Duchesse de Châteauroux in March, 1744, disgraced during the illness of the King at Metz, she died suddenly at the time she was returning to royal favor.

   Of the two other daughters of the Marquis de Nesle, one, Diane Adélaïde, born in 1714, had married in 1742

the Duc de Lauraguais; the other, Hortense, had the same year married François Marie de Fouilleux, Marquis de Flavacourt.

4. Choisy-le-Roi, which to-day only shows to the tourists its factory chimneys and the dull streets of a labouring town, was, at the time of Louis XV, a rather lively place.

The château, of which Louis XV had, in the time of the Nesle sisters, made his little house and hunting rendezvous, had been built by the *Grande Mademoiselle,* daughter of Gaston d'Orléans. It belonged to the Duc de la Vallière when Louis XV, attracted by its close proximity to the hunting grounds of the Sénart forest, made its acquisition in 1739. His first care as owner was to change the name of the village to Choisy-le-Roi from that by which it was then known of Choisy-Mademoiselle.

The Revolution marked the end of the château of Choisy.

5. The child born to Louis XV and Mme. de Vintimille occupied the attention of the King but a few months only, just the duration of the grief caused to the King by the death of the mother. He was brought up at Versailles, was given the title of Comte de Luc, received a pension from the King and the ownership of the regiment of *Royal Corse.* He died during the First Empire.

6. Louis Armand François du Plessis, Duc de Richelieu, grand-nephew of the great cardinal, widower in 1711 of Anne Catherine de Noailles, had married in 1744 Elizabeth Sophie de Lorraine, daughter of Prince de Guise.

7. Thérèse des Hayes, daughter of Marie Anne Carton-Dancourt and of Samuel Boulerion des Hayes, had married the former-general Alexandre Jean Joseph le Riche de la Popelinière and was then thirty years of age.

8. It was not without stupefaction that the public saw the favourite's brother raised to the rank of marquis.

9. The following is as according to the record published by M.

Le Roi, an exact statement of expenses of the Household of Mme. de Pompadour at Versailles:

"Nesme, head steward, 8,000 livres; Collin, in charge of the servants, 6,000; Quesnay, physician, supplied with all, 3,000; Sauvant, 2,000; Gourbillon, 1,800; Aunay, 200; Tréon, 150; Neven, 100; Duhausset, chamber-maid, 150; Courtaget, 150; Jeanneton, housekeeper, 400; Duguesnay, wardrobe maid, 100; Lignès, maître d'hôtel, 600; Bensît, chef, 400; Charles, assistant, 400; two kitchen boys, 400; Pastry-cook, 400; Rôtisseur, 400; Waiter, 200; Two kitchen boys, 400; Chef of servants' quarters, 400; Other chef of servants' quarters, 400; Assistant, 200; Waiter of servants' quarters, 150.

"Butler, 400; Butler's boy, 150; Outrider, 800; Head porter, 600; Four lackeys, 1,800; Torch-bearers, 300; Two negroes, 1,800; One janitor, 400; Two chief carriers, 1,120; Two other carriers, 770; Three coachmen, 2,575; Three post-boys, 1,566; Four grooms, 1,766; Three embroiderers, 1,500; The residence porter, 400."

10. This hôtel d'Evreux is no other than the present Palais de l'Elysée whose gardens, in the days of Mme. de Pompadour, took up a part of the Champs-Elysée (avenue Gabriel). Built in 1718 by the architect Molet for Comte d'Evreux, this residence became on the death of the marquise the property of her brother the Marquis de Marigny. Purchased by Louis XV to make of it the hôtel of the ambassador extraordinary, it served for a time as a repository of the Crown. It was finally acquired in 1773 by M. de Beaujon who, before living in it, made complete alteration and turned it into one of the most sumptuous residences of Paris. Sequestered as belonging to the Duchesse de Bourbon at the time of the Revolution, the Elysée became a sort of Tivoli where for some years public fêtes were given.

Since then, it has been inhabited in turn by Prince Murat under the First Empire, by the Duchesse de

Berry during the Restauration, by the prince-president at the time of the coup d'Etat of December and has finally become under the third republic the presidential residence.

11. Mme. de Pompadour, tired of her Celles residence, had Bellevue built in 1748 on a piece of property of the Sèvres warren, whose site had charmed her. L'Assurance and de l'Isle, her architects, were entrusted with the work. The plan they imagined so pleased the King that he himself undertook the watching of its execution.

Eight hundred workmen were employed on the work and on the occasion of the completion the architect L'Assurance received the cordon of Saint-Michel. Finally, on the 25th November, 1750, the King and his suite, dressed in scarlet, came to Bellevue to inaugurate the favourite's new residence, but the celebration was a failure: the chimneys smoked, the plasters were not dry and everybody had to go and sleep at Brimborion.

At Bellevue, the mode of living had that bourgeois simplicity which Louis XV so enjoyed; but few visitors were received there. The hunt in the woods of Meudon and comedy were the favourite pastimes of the favourites. And on the stage of Bellevue were seen the plays then in vogue of La Chaussée, Dancourt and Moncrif. In a performance of Rousseau's, "*Devin du Village*," Mme. de Pompadour triumphed in the character of Collin.

Mme. de Pompadour soon tired of Bellevue; in 1757, hardly seven years after its construction, she sold it to the King for the sum of 325,000 livres.

Bellevue had a sad ending. The Convention established a garrison there; all was given up to plunder, the orange trees were transported to the Tuileries, the park was devastated, the magnificent salons served as offices for the chief of division. In this way, the château was not long in falling to ruin. It was sold in the

year V, to a certain M. Testut who demolished it. The park after having passed through various hands, was cut up in 1823.

12. The chevalier was imprisoned not at Mont Saint-Michel, but in the Bastille and later at Pierre-Encize, not seven years, but twenty-two months.

13. Mme. de Pompadour was obliged to keep close watch on the King. What she feared was that he should contract a genuine passion for some one of the inmates of the Ermitage or, which would have been much more serious, for a lady of quality.

    Mme. de Pompadour lived in continual alarm since she had ceased to share the King's couch.

14. Alexandrine Jeanne Le Normant d'Etioles, daughter of Mme. de Pompadour, baptised at Saint Eustache, August 18, 1744, died at the Couvent des Dames de l'Assomption in 1754.

15. A full account of the trial of Damiens may be found in a volume somewhat rare to-day: "*Pièces originales et procédure du procès fait à Robert François Damiens,*" Paris, 1757. The motives which prompted Damiens' attack on the life of the King which to-day appears very insignificant have never been brought to light. The Jesuits having accused the Parliament, when the Parliament had everything to lose by the death of Louis XV, since the Dauphin was the tool of the Jesuits, the Parliament turned the accusation against them.

16. Louis XV's foreign policy was essentially conservative and specially tended towards the maintenance of the European equilibrium such as he had found it at the beginning of his reign.

    For particulars of the secret correspondence see the Duc de Broglie's: "*Le Secret du Roi,*" Paris, 1878, 2 vol.

17. Feeling the time approach when she would no longer hold the King by the bounds of passion, Mme. de Pom-

padour sought artificial means to continue to deceive the desires of Louis XV. (Memoires de Mme. du Hausset.)

18. Mme. de Pompadour, thanks to her police, was kept posted with regard to all the acts and movements of the King. As soon as she saw the beginning of a liaison that threatened to become dangerous, she made use of all possible means to break it.

19. The King's young mistress referred to and whom the author does not name is Mlle. O'Morphy or Murphy, ordinarily called *la Morphise* by contemporary writers. According to some reports the King was struck by the beauty of *la petite Morphise* who it is said had served as a model for a "Holy Family," painted by Boucher and destined to the Queen's private chapel. Mlle. O'Morphy was the youngest daughter of a dealer in cast clothes; the older daughters were all given to love affairs but did not acquire the notoriety of their younger sister. On occasion they also posed in painters' studios.

20. Among all the properties purchased by Mme. de Pompadour during her favour, she liked none so much as the *Ermitage* at Versailles. It was originally an irregular quadrilateral of 14,000 French acres, situated north of Versailles, between the Fountain of Neptune and the Saint-Germain road. In 1746, when Mme. de Pompadour became its owner, all that was there were trees in quincunx, a vegetable garden and a gardener's house. She intrusted one of her architects, L'Assurance, with the erection of a house and the tracing of a garden. On one side there was a park in the French style, on the other a botanical garden and a vegetable garden, separated by a stone balustrade. The gardens were filled with statues evoking love and beauty; the dwelling house was built against the inclosure wall, on the

side of the Saint-Germain road. All was ready in two months.

After the death of Mme. de Pompadour in 1764, the *Ermitage,* which should have gone to her brother, the Marquis de Marigny, passed into the hands of M. de Maurepas, and, after the death of the latter, in 1782, it became the property of Mesdames Adélaïde and Victoire, daughters of Louis XV, who occupied it until the Revolution. The *Ermitage* was sold as national property September 27, 1793, for the sum of 262,000 livres. It passed into various hands and finally disappeared obscurely.

21. The statement that the house of the Parc-aux-Cerfs was the same as the *Ermitage* is wholly inaccurate. The mystery of the site of that building has never been satisfactorily solved. Some writers have said that it was rue d'Anjou, others rue Saint Médéric and others still avenue de Saint Cloud. It is probable that there was no hôtel du Parc-aux-Cerfs, there was perhaps several small houses, the greater number of which were situated in the quarter of that name, at that time distant and solitary, and where the King during more than fifteen years, had intimate relations with various beauties and during variable periods. All stories regarding the Parc-aux-Cerfs must be considered as grossly exaggerated.

22. The woman who caused the most anxiety to Mme. de Pompadour was perhaps Mlle. de Romans (Anne Coupier, called de Romans). The King had contracted a violent passion for her.

"Mlle. de Romans was charming," says Mme. du Hausset, "Madame de Pompadour knew that the King saw her and confidants brought her alarming reports of their frequent meetings."

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